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Honoré de Balzac

THE HOUSEHOLD EDITION

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Household Edition

LES CONTES DROLATIQUES

COLLECTED IN THE ABBEYS OF TOURAINE AND BROUGHT FORTH INTO THE LIGHT

BY

Le Sieur de Balzac

FOR THE DIVERSION OF PANTAGRUELISTS AND OF NONE OTHERS

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE JOHN MURDOCH

ILLUSTRATED

AFTER PAINTINGS BY JACQUES WAGREZ

VOLUME II

PHILADELPHIA

GEORGE BARRIE & SON, PUBLISHERS

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THE COSTLY NIGHT OF LOVE

In the winter when they of the Religion made their first appeal to arms, which was called the Tumult of Amboise, an attorney named Avenelles lent his house, situated on Rue des Marmousets, for the meetings and conventions of the Huguenots, being one of them, yet misdoubting not that the Prince de Condé, La Renaudie, and others had it in mind to kidnap the king.

The said Avenelles was a red-bearded knave, smooth as a stick of licorice, pale as the devil, like all pettifoggers who burrow in the dark corners of the parliament-house,—in a word, the scurviest runagate of an advocate that ever lived, laughing at hangings, always ready to sell anything, a very Judas. According to some authors, this limb-of-the-law of shrewd understanding was in this matter half fig, half grape, as will abundantly appear in the present tale.

This attorney had married a rosy-cheeked Bourgeoise of Paris of whom he was jealous enough to kill her for a wrinkle in her sheets if she could not explain it to him; which would have been very wrong, seeing that there be often honest wrinkles therein; but she folded her sheets very smooth, and

that was all. Doubt not that, knowing this man's murderous and evil nature, the bourgeoise was most faithful, always ready like a candlestick, prepared for duty like a chest which never moves, and opens at the word of command. None the less, the advocate had placed her under the guardianship and bright eye of an old tire-woman, a duenna as ugly as a pitcher without a mouth, who had suckled Sieur Avenelles and was much attached to him. The poor bourgeoise had no other diversion in her dull life than the going to her devotions in the church of Saint-Jehan, on Place de Grève, where, as everyone knows, the people of quality meet by appointment. There, while reciting her *paternosters*, she regaled herself, through her eyes, by gazing at all those gallants in fine array, becurled, bestarched, going and coming, spruce and dainty as veritable butterflies. And she ended by selecting from among them all a nobleman who was of the friends of the queen-mother, a comely Italian with whom she fell in love, for that he was in the springtime of life, nobly dressed, graceful of movement, gallant of bearing, and was all a lover should be to fill with love the heart of a virtuous woman too tightly bound by the bonds of wedlock, the which always irritates her and incites her to disburden herself of the conjugal harness. And be sure that the young nobleman was smitten with the bourgeoise whose mute love spoke secretly to him, although neither they nor the devil knew how. Thereupon, they maintained a tacit love correspondence. Firstly, the advocate's

wife arrayed herself in her best only to go to church, and always appeared there in some new finery. Then, instead of thinking upon God, whereat God was wroth, thought of her comely nobleman, and, ceasing to pray, abandoned herself to the fire that burned her heart and moistened her eyes, lips, and everything, for this fire is always resolved into water; and many a time she said to herself:

"Ah! I would give my life for a single meeting with yon pretty lover who loves me!"

And many a time, instead of reciting her litanies to the Virgin, she thought thus in her heart:

"To feel the blooming youth of that comely lover and to know all the joys of love, to taste all in one instant, I would suffer the torments of the stake at which heretics are burned."

And the gentleman, remarking the sweet creature's attire and her blushes when he gazed at her, always drew near her bench and proffered those requests which the ladies understand so well. Then said to himself:

"By my father's double horn! I swear that I will have that woman, though it cost me my life!"

And when the duenna turned her head, the two lovers pressed against each other, sniffed, breathed hard, devoured with their eyes and kissed with a glance that would have lighted a harquebusier's match, had a harquebusier been at hand. A love that has entered so far into the heart must needs strike bottom. The nobleman attired himself as a student from Montaigu and set about regaling the

said Avenelles's clerks and making merry in their company, to the end that he might learn the husband's habits, his hours of absence, his journeys, and everything, watching for a hole wherein to plant a horn. And this is how the hole was found, to his undoing.

The advocate, being compelled to follow the course of this conspiracy, albeit he had in his own mind determined, at the proper time, to betray it to the Guises, contemplated going to Blois, where the court then was in great peril of being carried off. Knowing this, the nobleman went first to the town of Blois and there laid a most cunning snare whereinto Sieur Avenelles was sure to fall despite his craft, and to come forth drenched in crimson cuckoldry. The said Italian, drunk with love, convoked all his pages and retainers, and placed them in ambush, so that, on the arrival of the said advocate, his wife, and her duenna, they were told at every inn at which they sought to obtain lodgings, that, the inn being full by reason of the presence of the court, they must go elsewhere. Then my gentleman made a bargain with the landlord of the *Soleil Royal*, whereby he, the said gentleman, should have the whole house to himself and should occupy it, and that none of the servants of the house should remain there. For greater surety, the nobleman sent the said master scullion and his people into the country, and so stationed his own servants that the advocate knew naught of the bargain. Thereupon, my honest gentleman entertains in his inn

his own friends who had come to court, and reserves for himself a chamber situated above those wherein he proposed to put his fair mistress, her advocate, and the duenna, not without making a hole in the floor. Then, his chief cook being bidden to play the rôle of landlord, his pages dressed in the guise of scullions, his maids as inn-servants, he waited until his spies should bring him the leading characters of this farce, to wit: wife, husband, duenna, and all, who failed not to come. Because of the great multitude of great nobles, merchants, men-at-arms, retainers, and others brought to Blois by the presence of the young king, the two queens, the Guises, and all the court, no living being had liberty to be amazed or to prattle of the trap set for the pettifogger and the grand overturn at the *Soleil Royal*.

Behold, now, Sieur Avenelles, on his arrival, with his wife and the maid-servant duenna, sent from inn to inn, and deeming himself most fortunate to be received at this *Soleil Royal*, where the gallant was chafing and love was cooking. The advocate safely housed, the gentleman walked about the courtyard, in quest of a glance from his lady, nor had he to wait overlong, forasmuch as Madame Avenelles soon looked out into the courtyard, after the manner of her sex, and there espied, not without a violent throb of the heart, her gallant and well-beloved swain. Ah! how happy she was! And if, perchance, they had been alone by themselves for a second of time, my gentleman would not have had to wait for his good-fortune, so inflamed was she from head to foot.

"Ah! how hot it is in the glare of this nobleman!" she said, meaning to say "of this sun," for, in truth, the sun was shining bright.

Hearing which, the advocate sprang to the window and saw my gentleman.

"Oho! you would have noblemen, would you, my love?" he cried, seizing her by the arm and throwing her like one of his money-bags on the bed. "Understand that, if I carry a satchel at my side and not a sword, I have a knife in that satchel; and the knife will go to your heart at the least trace of conjugal feathers. Methinks I have seen yonder gentleman somewhere."

The advocate was so bitter in his ill-humor, that the lady, having risen, said to him:

"Oh! kill me! I am ashamed to deceive you. You shall never touch me more after maltreating me thus. And from this day I think of naught save the lying with a lover more agreeable than you."

"La la! my pet," said the astonished advocate, "I went too far. Kiss me, dear, and forgive me."

"I will neither kiss you nor forgive you," said she; "you are a wretch!"

Avenelles, in a fury, sought to take by force what his wife denied him, and there ensued a battle from which the husband emerged well marked; but the worst was that the advocate, all embellished with scratches, being awaited by the conspirators, who were holding council, was compelled to leave his good wife in charge of the old woman.

The pettifogger out of sight, the gentleman stationed one of his servants at the corner of the street, went up to his blessed trap-door, raised it without noise, and called to the lady with a *pst! pst!* half-silent, which was heard by the heart, which commonly hears everything. Whereat the damsel raised her head and saw her comely lover four leaps of a flea over her head. At a sign, she seized two stout silk laces, with buckles attached, through which she passed her arms, and, in a twinkling, was translated by the aid of two pullies from her bed to the chamber above, through the ceiling, which, having closed as it had opened, left the old duenna alone, and in sore distress when, turning her head, she saw neither robe nor woman and realized that the woman had been stolen. How? by whom? by what? where? *Pille, Nade, Jocque, Fore!* The alchemists knew as much at their retorts, reading *Her Trippa.* But the old woman knew well what the crucible was and what the great work: the latter was cuckoldry, and the other the advocate's wife's pretty treasure. So there she sat crestfallen, awaiting Sieur Avenelles, that is to say, death, for in his frenzy he would destroy everything; nor could she escape, the poor duenna; for, through excess of prudence, the jealous spouse had carried away the keys.

At first sight, Madame Avenelles saw a dainty supper, a good fire on the hearth, but a better in the heart of her lover, who caught her up, kissed her, with tears of joy, on the eyes first of all, to thank

them for their kindly glances during her devotions at the church of Saint-Jehan on La Grève. Then the advocate's good lady, inflamed by passion, did not deny her lips to love, and allowed herself to be worshipped, hugged, caressed, overjoyed to be well worshipped, well hugged, well caressed, after the fashion of famished lovers. And they agreed to belong to each other throughout the night, heedless of what might come after; she, counting the future as naught beside the joys of that night; he, trusting to his influence and his sword to obtain others,—in short, both caring little for life if only, at one stroke, they could consume a thousand lives, enjoy untold bliss, each returning to the other twofold what was received, thinking both that they were falling into an abyss and choosing to fall together in close embrace, expending all the love of their hearts in one frantic outburst! Ah! they loved each other well! The poor bourgeois know naught of love, who lie timidly with their housewives, for they have no knowledge of the keen throbbings of the heart, the warm currents of life, the vigorous embraces with which two young lovers, newly united and glowing with desire, exchange their vows in the face of imminent risk of death. Wherefore, the lady and gentleman barely tasted the supper and were soon in bed. We must needs leave them to their task, forasmuch as no words, save those current in paradise and to us unknown, can describe their agonizing bliss and their ecstatic quivering.

Meanwhile, the husband, so thoroughly cuckolded

that every memory of marriage was swept away by love,—the said Avenelles was in sore straits. At the council of the Huguenots appeared the Prince de Condé, who was accompanied by all the chief men and bigwigs; and it was there resolved to kidnap the queen-mother, the Guises, the young king, the young queen, and to change the government. Matters were becoming serious, and the advocate, seeing that his head was at stake, remarked not the horns newly planted thereon, but hastened to blab the conspiracy to Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine, who carried my pettifogger with him to the duke, his brother, where they all three remained to talk, making fine promises to Sieur Avenelles, whom with much reluctance they dismissed about midnight, at which hour he left the château by stealth.

At that moment, the nobleman's pages and all his people were holding high revel in honor of their master's fortuitous nuptials. Now, arriving at the height of the feast, amid drunkenness and merry hiccoughs, the aforesaid Avenelles was assailed with mockery, gibes, and laughter which made him turn pale when he reached his chamber and saw only the duenna there. The poor creature would have spoken, but the advocate straightway put his hand on her mouth and commanded silence with a gesture. Then he felt in his trunk and produced a good dagger. While he unsheathed and polished it, a frank, artless, joyous, loving, rippling, celestial burst of laughter, followed by divers words easy of comprehension, made themselves heard through the trap-door.

The sly advocate, extinguishing his candle, saw through the cracks in the ceiling around that extra-judicial aperture a light which vaguely solved the mystery, for he recognized his wife's voice and the adversary's. He seized the duenna by the arm and went upstairs with catlike tread, seeking the door of the room where the lovers were, nor did he fail to find it. Whereupon, with a terrific advocate's kick, he burst the door open and sprang in one bound to the bed, where he found his wife half-naked in the nobleman's arms.

"Ah!" he exclaimed.

The lover, having eluded the blow, tried to snatch the dagger from the hands of the pettifogger, who held it tight. Now, in this life-and-death struggle, the husband, finding himself sorely hampered by his substitute, who held him fast with his iron fingers, and bitten by his wife, who tore him viciously, gnawed him as a dog does a bone, bethought him of a better way to satisfy his wrath. Thereupon, the newly-horned devil, speaking in his patois, treacherously bade the duenna to bind the lovers with the silken cords of the trap, and, throwing the dagger away, he helped her to truss them. Then, the thing being done in a turn of the hand, stuffed linen in their mouths to prevent their crying out and ran for his trusty dagger, without saying a word.

At that moment entered several officers of the Duc de Guise whom, during the battle, no one had heard turning everything topsy-turvy in the inn, searching for Sieur Avenelles. These troopers, suddenly

advised by a cry from the pages that their lord was bound, gagged, about to be slain, threw themselves between the man with the dagger and the lovers, disarmed him, then performed their mission by arresting him and haling him to the prison of the château, with his wife and the duenna. Thereafter the people of Messieurs de Guise, recognizing a friend of their masters, whom the queen at that moment was most anxious to consult, and whom they were bidden to summon to the Council, requested him to go with them. And the gentleman, while dressing himself, as soon as he was unbound, said privately to the leader of the escort: That, upon his head and for love of him, he must take care to keep the husband away from his wife, promising him his favor, speedy promotion, and even much wealth if he would be careful to obey him in this point. Then, for greater surety, he disclosed to him the why of the affair, adding that, if the husband should come within reach of that sweet creature, he would surely deal her a blow in the belly from which she would never recover. And, finally, he bade him confine the lady in the gaol of the château, in a pleasant room, on the garden floor, and the advocate in a veritable dungeon, not forgetting to fetter him securely. The which the said officer promised and performed, according to the nobleman's wishes, who bore the lady company to the courtyard of the château, assuring her that by this stroke she would be a widow, and that he would, perchance, make her his lawful wife.

In sooth, Sieur Avenelles was cast into an underground dungeon, without air, and his wife placed in a little closet above him, by the consideration of her lover, who was Signor Scipio Sardini, a nobleman of Lucca, very rich, and, as hath been said above, a friend of Queen Catherine de Medicis, who was then in full accord with the Guises. He then went hastily to the queen's apartments, where a great secret Council was being held, and where the Italian learned what was in the wind, and the danger that threatened the court. Monsignor Sardini found the privy councillors much surprised and puzzled by this dilemma; but he brought them all to be of one mind, telling them that they must so act as to derive all the advantage themselves, and to him was due the sage determination to take the king to the château of Amboise, to entrap the heretics there like foxes in a bag, and to kill them all. Now, everyone knows how the queen-mother and the Guises continued to dissemble their sentiments, and how the Tumult of Amboise ended. That is not the subject of this tale.

In the morning, then, when everyone left the queen's chamber where the whole plan had been arranged, Monsignor Sardini, not forgetting the love of his bourgeoise, albeit he was even then deeply smitten with La Belle Limeuil, a maiden in the queen-mother's service and akin to her through the family of La Tour de Turenne, asked why the worthy Judas had been caged. Thereupon, the Cardinal de Lorraine told him that he had no purpose

to injure the pettifogger; but that, fearing that he would repent, or to make surer of his silence until the end of the business, he had put him out of the way, but would set him free in due time.

"Set him free!" exclaimed the Italian. "Nenni! stuff the black robe in a bag and throw him into the Loire. In the first place, I know him, and he's not the man to forgive you for jailing him; he will return to the Religion. And, as you know, 'tis blessed in God's sight to rid Him of a heretic. Then no one will know your secrets, and no one of his adherents will think of asking you what has become of him, because he is a traitor. Allow me to rescue his wife and arrange the rest; I will rid you of him."

"Aha!" said the cardinal, "you are well advised. So, before acting on your advice, I will have them both more narrowly confined. Ho there!"

An officer came, to whom was given the order to allow no person whatsoever to communicate with the two prisoners. Then the cardinal requested Sardini to say at his inn that the said advocate had departed from Blois to return to his lawsuits at Paris. The persons commissioned to arrest the advocate had had verbal orders to treat him as a man of importance: so they neither searched him nor stripped him. So it was that the advocate retained thirty gold crowns in his purse and resolved to risk everything in order to satisfy his vengeance, and to prove by sound arguments to the gaolers that he should be allowed to see his wife, upon whom he doted and desired lawful intercourse with her.

Monsignor Sardini, dreading, on his mistress's account, the neighborhood of that red-haired knave, and greatly fearing some misadventure for her, determined to carry her off by night and bestow her in a safe place. Accordingly, he hired certain boatmen and their boat, stationed them near the bridge, and ordered three of his most adroit servants to file the bars of the cell, take charge of the lady, and escort her to the wall of the garden, where he would be in waiting.

These preparations being made, and stout files purchased, he obtained the favor in the morning of an audience of the queen-mother, whose apartments were above the moats where the said advocate and his wife were confined, trusting that the queen would gladly connive at this flight. He was received by her, and begged her not to be displeased with him because he sought to set the lady free unknown to the cardinal and Monsieur de Guise. Then he once more urged her most earnestly to tell Monsieur de Lorraine to throw the man into the river. To which the queen said: *Amen*. Thereupon, the lover straightway despatched a note to his mistress in a dish of cucumbers, to advise her of her approaching widowhood and of the hour of the flight, with all of which she was well content, the bourgeoise. And at dusk, the soldiers on guard being sent away by the queen, to watch a moonbeam which frightened her, the servants speedily removed the bars and called the lady, who failed not to come and was taken to the wall to Monsignor Sardini.

But when the postern was closed and the Italian outside with the lady, lo! the lady is transformed into an advocate, and lo! my said advocate clutches his wife's paramour by the throat, strangles him, and drags him to the bank to throw him into the Loire! And Sardini defends himself, cries, struggles, but cannot, despite his stiletto, rid himself of that devil in a long robe. Then he ceased to shout as he fell into a slough under the feet of the advocate, whose face he saw by the moonlight, through the haze of that infernal struggle, all smeared with his wife's blood. The advocate, in a frenzy of passion, left the Italian, deeming him dead, and also because servants armed with torches were running to the spot. But he had time to leap into the boat and depart in hot haste.

Thus did poor Madame Avenelles alone die, forasmuch as Monsignor Sardini, being but bunglingly strangled, was found lying in the water and recovered from the assault. And later, as everyone knows, married La Belle Limeuil, after that charming damsel had been brought to bed in the queen's closet. A great scandal which, through friendship, the queen-mother wished to hide, and which, through great love, Sardini covered up by marriage, upon whom Catherine bestowed the fine estate of Chaumont-sur-Loire and the château besides. But he had none the less been so fiercely maltreated, squeezed, stamped upon, and belabored by the husband, that he did not live to be old, and La Belle Limeuil became a widow in her prime.

Despite his crime, the advocate was not prosecuted. On the contrary, he had the art to obtain his inclusion, in the last edict of pacification, among those who were not to be molested, having returned to the Huguenots, in whose behalf he was employed in Germany.

Poor Madame Avenelles! pray for her salvation, forasmuch as she was cast no one knows whither, had not the prayers of the Church nor Christian burial. Alas! think of her, ye ladies whose love-affairs run smoothly!

THE SERMON OF THE JOLLY CURÉ OF MEUDON

When Master François Rabelais came for the last time to the court of King Henry, second of the name, it was in the winter when he was destined, by the power of nature, to lay aside his doublet of flesh, that he might live forever in his writings, resplendent with goodly philosophy to which we must needs always return. The goodman had at that time seen seventy flights of the swallow or nearly that. His Homeric head was swept well-nigh clean of hair, but he still had his beard combed in all majesty and still exhaled the breath of spring in his coy smile, even as all wisdom dwelt in his ample brow. He was a handsome old man, according to those who had the good fortune to see his face, wherein Socrates and Aristophanes, once foes, but friends therein, blended their images. And so, hearing his last hours tinkling in his ears, he bethought himself to go and doff his cap to the King of France, inasmuch as, the said lord king having come to his château of Tournelles, the goodman had the court within the cast of a sling, seeing that he lived in a house within the gardens of Saint-Paul.

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In the chamber of Queen Catherine at the time were: Madame Diane de Poitiers, whom she received in her company from far-seeing policy; the king; monsieur le connétable, Cardinals de Lorraine and Bellay, Messieurs de Guise, Sieur de Birague, and other Italians, who even then pushed themselves forward at court under the queen's wing; the admiral; Montgomery; the officers of the household in attendance, and divers poets, as Melin de Saint-Gelays, Philibert de l'Orme, and Sieur Brantôme.

Espying the goodman, the king, who esteemed him a merry fellow, said to him, with a smile, after a few words:

"Hast thou ever preached a sermon to thy flock at Meudon?"

Master Rabelais thought that the king meant to jest, seeing that his cure of souls had never cost him other care than the receiving the revenues of the living, wherefore he replied:

"Sire, my lambs are in every place, and my sermons heard by all Christendom."

Then, casting a glance at all the courtiers there present, who, save only Messieurs du Bellay and de Châtillon, esteemed him as no more than a learned Triboulet, albeit he was the king of wits and more kingly than he whose favor-bestowing crown alone the courtiers worshipped, there came to the goodman a mischievous desire, before taking his breeches out of this world, to relieve himself metaphorically over all their heads, even as worthy

Gargantua delighted to steam the Parisians on the towers of Notre-Dame. Whereupon he added:

"If you are in merry mood, sire, I can regale you with a fine little sermon, for perpetual use, the which I have kept under the drum of my left ear, to the end that I might deliver it in due time, by way of aulic parable."

"Messieurs," said the king, "the word lies with Master François Rabelais, and our salvation is his theme. Hold your peace, then, and lend your ears: most fruitful is he in pious drollery."

"Sire," said the goodman, "I begin."

Then did all the courtiers hold their peace, and place themselves in a circle, pliant as osier twigs, before the creator of Pantagruel, who unfolded to them the following tale in words whereof the wondrous eloquence none could equal. But inasmuch as this tale hath been handed down to our day by word of mouth alone, the author may be pardoned for writing it in his own words.

In his old days, was Gargantua given to strange habits, whereat they of his household marvelled much, but none the less forgave him, seeing that his years were seven hundred and four, the assertion of Saint Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromates* notwithstanding, who will have it that they were at this time a fourth part of a day less, which matters little to us. Now, that paternal old man, seeing that everything went crooked in his house and that everyone was feathering his own nest, was sorely afraid lest he should be left naked in his last

moments, and determined to establish a more perfect system of administering his domains. And he did well. For, in a secret corner of the Gargantuan dwelling, he hid a fine heap of red wheat, also twenty jars of mustard and divers dainty morsels, as plums and Touraine *halleberges*, white loaves, lard, bits of pork, Olivet and goat's-milk cheese, and other cheeses, well known between Langeais and Loches, jars of butter, hare pasties, ducks *à la dodine*, pigs' feet in bran, boats and pots of crushed peas, dainty little boxes of Orléans quinces, barrels of lamprey, casks of green sauce, river game—as *francolins*, *tyransons*, wild duck, heron, *phenicoptera* preserved in sea-salt, dried grapes, tongues smoked after the manner invented by Happe-Mousche, his famous ancestor; sweetmeats, too, for Gargamelle on his good days; and a thousand other things whereof the enumeration may be read in the collection of Ripuary laws and in some stray folios of the Capitularies, Pragmatics, Royal Establishments, Ordinances, and Institutions of the time.

Whereupon, the goodman, putting his spectacles on his nose or his nose on his spectacles, set forth in quest of a fine flying dragon or unicorn, to which might be given this priceless treasure to guard. And, absorbed by that grave thought, he walked in his gardens. He would have none of the *Coquesigrues*, for that the Egyptians were obnoxious to them, as appears by the Hieroglyphics. The cohorts of *Caucquemarres* he spurned, for that the Emperors liked them not, nor the Romans, as says

that crafty wight whom we know by the name of Tacitus. Then, too, he rejected the *Pichrocholiers* in senate assembled; the spadefuls of Magi, basketfuls of Druids, the legion of Papimania and the Massorets, who grew like dog's teeth, and overran all lands, as had been told him by his son Pantagruel on his return from his travels.

Now, the goodman, overhauling ancient Gallic tales, placed no confidence in any race, and, had it been permissible so to do, would have prayed for a new one to the Creator of all things; but, not daring to weary Him with his petty troubles, poor Gargantua knew not whom to choose, and much feared that his so great wealth would be a sore burden to him; when there fell in his path a pretty little shrew, of the noble race of shrews, whose arms have all gules on a field azure.—*Ventre-Mahom!* be sure that it was a fine male, who had the finest tail of all his family, and strutted in the sunlight like a worthy shrew of the good Lord, proud to have been on this earth since the subsiding of the Deluge, according to letters patent of incontestable nobility, registered in the universal parliament, seeing that it is set forth, in the report of the œcumenical council, that there was a shrew in Noah's ark.

Here Master Alcofribas raised his cap slightly and said religiously:

"Noah, my lords, who planted the vine and first had the good fortune to be drunken with wine."

For sure it is that there was a shrew in the Ark, whence we all came forth; but men have made unfit

marriages, and not the shrews, forasmuch as they are more jealous of their blazonry than all other beasts, and will not admit a field-mouse among them, even though that field-mouse should have the special gift of transmuting grains of sand into pretty fresh walnuts. This fine figure of a gentleman having attracted the notice of the worthy Gargantua, he conceived the idea of appointing the shrew to the lieutenancy of his granaries, with most ample powers: Justice, *Committimus*, *Missi Dominici*, Clergy, Men-at-arms, and all. The shrew promised faithfully to execute his office, and to do his duty like a royal shrew, on condition that he might live upon the pile of wheat, the which seemed to honest Gargantua but right.

Behold my shrew capering about in his fine domain, as happy as a happy prince, reconnoitring his vast empires of mustard, kingdoms of sweetmeats, provinces of ham, duchies of raisins, counties of chitterlings, baronies of all sorts of things, climbing on the heaps of wheat and sweeping everything with his tail. In sooth, the shrew was everywhere received with all honor by the jars, which maintained a respectful silence, save one or two gold cups which clashed like church-bells, after the manner of a tocsin, whereat he showed much pleasure, and thanked them all from right to left by a nod of the head, walking in a beam of light which the sun cast into his domain. Therein the dark-brown hue of his fur did glisten so that you would have thought him a king out of the North in his Siberian marten's

furs. Then, after turning and returning, leaping and capering, he munched two grains of wheat, seated on the heap like a king amid his court, and esteemed himself the most gallant of shrews.

At that moment came forth from their accustomed holes my lords of the night-walking court, who scamper merrily over the floors, to wit: rats, mice, and all the thieving, idle, gnawing creatures of whom good bourgeois and housewives complain. Now, one and all, seeing the shrew, were afraid, and stood shyly in the doorways of their hovels. Among all those tiny heads there came a long way forward, the danger notwithstanding, one old miscreant of the scampering, gnawing race of mice, who, flattening his nose against the window, had the courage to face my Lord Shrew, planted on his rump, tail in air, and in good time recognized that he was a devil with whom there was naught but scratches to be gained. This is how. Honest Gargantua, in order that his lieutenant's exalted authority might be known to all shrews, cats, weasels, pole-cats, field-mice, mice, rats, and other naughty varlets of the same kidney, had lightly dipped his muzzle, sharp as a larding-needle, in oil of musk, whereof shrews have ever since inherited the odor, because this fellow rubbed himself, despite Gargantua's wise counsel, against other sharp-nosed folk. Hence came the troubles in Shrewland, whereof you should have a full account in a book of history, were it not that time is lacking. Thereupon, an old mouse or a rat,—the rabbis of the Talmud

are not as yet agreed concerning the species,—recognizing by the said odor that the shrew was appointed to keep watch over Gargantua's grain, and had been anointed with virtue, invested with ample power, and armed at all points, was sore afraid that he could live no longer, according to the custom of mice, upon crumbs, gnawings, crusts, leavings, parings, morsels, fragments, and a thousand other dainties of that promised land of rats. Now, in this dilemma, the good mouse, as wily as an old courtier who hath seen two regencies and three kings, resolved to test the shrew's wit and to sacrifice himself for the salvation of all ratamorphous jaws. This would have been a noble thing for a man to do, far more for a mouse, in view of the selfishness of those creatures, who live for themselves alone, without modesty or shame; and, in order to pass more quickly, would defecate on a consecrated wafer, gnaw a priest's stole, without shame, and drink from a chalice, paying little heed to God. The mouse came forward, bowing prettily, and the shrew allowed him to come quite near, for I must needs tell you that the shrews are by nature short-sighted. Then the Curtius of nibblers spake thus, not in mouse patois, but in good shrew Tuscan:

"My lord, many a time have I heard of your glorious family, whereof I am one of the most devoted servitors, and know the whole legend of your ancestors, who were of old revered by the ancient Egyptians, who held them in great veneration and worshipped them even as they worshipped other

sacred birds. Nathless, your fur robe is so royally perfumed, and the color is such a super-extra beautiful dark brown, that I hesitate to recognize you as belonging to that race, inasmuch as I have never seen one of them so splendidly arrayed. And yet you swallowed the grain after the ancient fashion; your muzzle is the muzzle of wisdom; you kicked like a learned shrew; but, if a true shrew you be, you surely have in I know not what part of your ear, I know not what superauditive conduit, which I know not what mysterious door closes I know not how, at I know not what times, in obedience to your secret behests, in order to give you the power, I know not why, to abstain from listening to I know not what things which are unpleasant to you, in view of the perfection of your sacrosanct hearing, capable of hearing everything which often causes you pain."

"Even so," said the shrew. "Now the door is closed, I can hear naught."

"Let us see," replied the old rogue.

And he plunged into the pile of wheat, whence he began to lay in his winter's store.

"Do you hear?" he said.

"I hear the beating of my heart."

"*Kouik!*" cried all the mice, "we will cheat him!"

The shrew, thinking that he had a faithful servitor, opened the trap-door of his musical orifice, and heard the *trictrac* of the grain sliding into the hole. Thereupon, staying not to have recourse to

the justice of his lord's commissioners, he pounced upon the old mouse and choked him to death. A glorious death! forasmuch as the hero died amid the grain and was canonized as a martyr. The shrew took him by the ears and nailed him to the door of the granary after the method of the Ottoman Porte, where my good Panurge was near being spitted. At his dying shriek, all the mice, rats, and gentry vanished from their holes in great fear. And then, when it was night, they all assembled in the cellar, convoked in council to discuss public affairs, to which council were admitted lawful wives, by virtue of the Lex Papiria and other laws. The rats insisted upon going before the mice, and the eternal quarrel concerning precedence was near spoiling all; but a great rat took a mouse on his arm, father rats took mother mice, and being thus coupled, all sat upon their rumps, with tails in air, noses extended, beards bristling, and eyes as bright as a falcon's. Thereupon began a discussion which ended in insults and a hullabaloo worthy of a great council of œcumenical fathers. Some said yes, others no, and a passing cat would have taken fright and fled on hearing such strange noises: *Bou bou! frou ou ou! houic! houic! briff! briffnac nac nac! fouix fouix! trr trr trr trr! razza za za zaaa! brr brrr! raaa! ra ra ra ra! fouix!* so well blended in a vocal tumult, that a body of councillors in a hôtel de ville could have done no better.

In the midst of this tempest, a little female mouse, of too tender years to enter Parliament, thrust her

inquisitive nose through a crack, the skin thereon being as fine as that of all mice who have never been caught. Now, as the tumult waxed greater, the body followed the nose, and ere long the damsel fell upon the hoop of a cask to the which she clung right dexterously, so that you would have thought her a charming masterpiece engraved in antique bas-relief. As he raised his eyes heavenward to propose a wise remedy for the woes of the State, an old rat, espying this pretty mouse, so sweet to look upon, proclaimed that the State was destined to be saved by her. All the noses were turned toward this Lady of Grateful Succor, and became silent, being all agreed to set her upon the shrew; and, despite the anger of divers envious mice, she was paraded in triumph about the cellar, where, seeing her walk with mincing step, move mechanically the springs of her tail, nod her sly little head, waggle her transparent ears, and lick with her little pink tongue the lips and sprouting beard of her *bagonisier*, the old rats fell in love with her and grunted and smacked their wrinkled, white-moustached lips, even as did the Trojans of old as they gazed upon the fair Helen returning from her bath.

And so the maiden was turned into the granaries, her mission being to lay siege to the shrew's heart and rescue the grain-nibbling race, even as the fair Jewess Esther did for God's people in the days of King Ahasuerus, as it is written in the Book of Books, forasmuch as *Bible* is derived from the Greek *Biblos*, as if you should say the only book.

The mouse promised to throw open the granaries, for, as chance willed, she was the very queen of mice, a downy, smooth, plump little mouse, the daintiest little lady that ever ran merrily along the beams, tripped lightly along the friezes, and uttered the sweetest cries when she found nuts, crumbs, and bits of bread in her walks abroad; a true fairy, a pretty, madcap wench, with an eye as bright as a white diamond, tiny head, smooth hair, lascivious body, pink paws, velvety tail, a well-bred smile, fine language, by nature fond of lying down and doing nothing—a gamesome mouse, more crafty than an old doctor of the Sorbonne who knows his Decretals; lively withal, with a white breast, striped back, tiny nipples just peeping forth like a suspicion, pearly teeth, an ardent nature—in very truth, a morsel for a king!

(This description was so bold, inasmuch as the mouse seemed to all to be the perfect image of Madame Diane, then present, that the courtiers were terror-stricken. Queen Catherine smiled, but the king was little moved to laughter. And honest Rabelais continued, seeking not to understand the glances of Messieurs du Bellay and de Châtillon, who were in great fear for the goodman.)

The pretty mouse made no long détours, and on the first evening that the sly minx appeared before the shrew she enslaved him forever by her coquetries, cajoleries, kittenish tricks, little coaxing rebuffs, enticing glances, the teasing ways of a maid who would, but dares not, amorous wiles, half-caresses,

preliminary oglings, haughty airs of a mouse who knows her value, laughable quarrels, quarrelsome laughter, amorous toying, and other pretty trifling, feminine ruses, sweet, alluring words, and all the snares which women of all countries use. And when, after much bowing, patting of paws, rubbing of noses, and many gallant advances on the amorous shrew's part, together with frowns, sighs, serenades, nibblings, dinners and suppers on the piles of grain, and other foolery, the superintendent of the granaries vanquished his fair mistress's scruples, they partook together of that incestuous and illicit love; and the mouse, forasmuch as she held the shrew by his passion, became the queen of all, must needs spread mustard on her grain, nibble the sweetmeats, and forage everywhere. The which the shrew permitted to the empress of his heart, although he was sore disturbed by this failure to perform his duties as shrew and to keep the oath he had given Gargantua.

Pursuing her evangelical enterprise with true female pertinacity, on a certain night when they made merry together, the mouse remembered her dear old father, and demanded that he be allowed to feed on the grain at his pleasure, and threatened the shrew to leave him alone to shiver with the cold in his domain, should he refuse to give her filial piety full liberty to satisfy itself. Whereupon, with a twist of his paw, did the shrew grant letters patent, clothed with the great seal of green wax, and tied with crimson silk, to his wench's father,

wherein it was provided that the Gargantuan palace should be open to him at all hours, and that he could see his dear virtuous daughter and kiss her forehead and eat his fill, but in a corner. Thereupon, there came a venerable rat with a white tail, weighing twenty-five ounces, who walked like a president *à mortier*, wagging his head, and was followed by fifteen or twenty nephews, all toothed like saws, who proved to the shrew, by pleasant remarks and harangues of every sort, that they, his kinsmen, were loyally attached to him and would break their backs to help him to take account of all the things whereof he had charge, to arrange them neatly and label them, to the end that, when Gargantua should come to inspect his property, he would find the finances and larder in perfect order. This had an appearance of truth. Nathless, the poor shrew, despite this moral reasoning, was beset by divers warnings from on high, and by the noisy outcries of the shrew conscience.

Seeing that he sniffed at everything and went about on one paw, careworn with the cares of his master, one morning, as they jested together, the mouse, who was with child by him, conceived the idea of calming his doubts and setting his mind at rest by a conference after the manner of the Sorbonne, and summoned the learned doctors of the tribe. And during the day she brought to him one Sieur Evegault, just out of a cheese, where he lived abstinently; an old confessor, stuffed with rich grease, a knave of goodly mien, with a fine black

coat, solid as a tower, his head partly shaven by a blow from a cat's paw. He was a solemn-faced rat, with monastic paunch, who had studied scientific authorities while nibbling Decretal parchments and Clementine documents, books of all sorts, whereof divers fragments had stained his gray beard. Likewise, because of their great honor and reverence for his lofty virtue, wisdom, and modest cheese-eating existence, he was accompanied by a troop of black rats coupled with pretty little private mice, inasmuch as the canons of the Council of Chezil had not yet been adopted, and it was lawful for them to have decent women for concubines. The said rats and mice, holders of prebends and benefices, were arranged in two lines, so that you would have thought them a procession from the University going to Lendit. And they all began to sniff the food.

When they had all taken their places for the ceremony, the old cardinal of the rats took the floor and delivered a discourse in mouse-Latin wherein he demonstrated to the shrew that no one, save God alone, was above him; and that to God alone he owed obedience; and many fine periods bedecked with quotations from the Gospel, to distort the principles of faith and confuse his hearers,—in a word, much artful reasoning, larded with strips of good sense. The which discourse concluded with a peroration amply stuffed with sonorous words in honor of the race of shrews, among whom the one before him was the most illustrious and best that had ever

lived under the sun; with all of which was the guardian of the granaries much bewildered.

This worthy gentleman's head was turned in every sense, and he installed these rats who were such fluent talkers in his domain, where by night and day were spoken gilded words of praise, with many a pretty ballad in his honor, nor was his lady forgotten, for each one kissed her paw and sniffed her merry rump. And last of all, the mistress, knowing that divers young rats were fasting still, determined to complete her work. So she played right well with her lips, lamenting with words of love, and practising a thousand of those cajoleries whereof a single one suffices to destroy the soul of beasts, and told the shrew that he wasted much time of priceless value to their love by pacing to and fro and standing guard over his charge; that he was always going here and there, and that she never had her rightful share of pleasure; that, when she longed for him, he was sure to be astride the gutters, chasing cats; and that she would fain have him always ready like a lance, and gallant like a bird. Thereupon, she tore out a gray hair with much pain, deeming herself the most unhappy mouse on earth, and wept. Then did the shrew remind her that she was mistress of everything, and tried to remonstrate; but, after a shower of tears which the lady shed, he implored a truce and asked what she desired. Thereupon, all her tears were dried, and, giving him her paw to kiss, the mouse advised him to arm troopers, true and tried rats, ex-condottieri, sure men, who

would make the rounds and stand guard. Thus were all things wisely ordered. The shrew had the whole day to sport and dance, to make love, to listen to the rondeaux and ballads which the poets composed for him, to play upon the lute and mandolin, make acrostics, eat and make merry.

One day, his mistress having just risen from her lying-in, after giving birth to the sweetest little mouse-shrew or shrew-mouse,—I know not what name was given to this product of amorous alchemy, which you may be sure they of the long robe legitimized,—at this point, the Connétable de Montmorency, who had given his son in marriage to a legitimized bastard of the king, put his hand to his sword and grasped the hilt with a terrible frown, —there was a fête in the granaries to which no court festivities that you have ever seen could be compared, not even those of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In every corner were mice making merry. On all sides there were dances of every sort, concerts, drinking, banquets, sarabands, music, merry songs, and epithalamia. The rats had broken into the pots, uncovered the jars, overturned the demijohns, and foraged among the reserve stores. And you should have seen the rivers of mustard, disjointed hams, scattered heaps of grain! Everything ran and flowed and trickled, and the little rats dabbled in streams of green sauce. The mice sailed about on sweetmeats, the old fellows carried off the pasties. There were martens astride salted beef-tongues. Field-mice swam in the pots, and the

shrewdest carted grain to their private holes, profiting by the uproar of the feast to lay in an abundant store. No one passed before the Orléans quinces without saluting them with a bite, often with two. In short, 'twas like a Roman carnival. He who had a sharp ear would have heard the hissing of the frying-pans, the cries and noises of the kitchens, the crackling of ovens, the *panpan* of mortars, the *glouglou* of stewpans, the *hinhin* of turnspits, the rustling of baskets, the *froufrou* of pastry, the clashing of spits, and the tiny feet pattering like hail over the floors. There were hasty nuptials, scamperings to and fro of all the officers of the household, scullions, footmen, grooms, to say nothing of the musicians, swarms of merry-andrews, compliments on every side, drums of soldiers, and deafening racket of the three Orders. And at last, so great was the joy, they all seized one another and danced a general rigadoon to celebrate that famous night.

But, lo! they heard the dread step of Gargantua, who mounted the stairs to visit his granaries, and made the beams tremble and the floor and all the rest. Some old rats sought the meaning of that noise, and since none knew what that lordly step might be, some decamped in deadly terror, and well for them they did so, seeing that the master entered suddenly.

Now, seeing the havoc wrought by messieurs the rats, seeing that his preserves and jars were eaten, his mustard smeared about and everything defiled

and ruined, he planted his foot upon those merry-making vermin to crush them, not giving them time to cry out; and thus did he spoil their fine satin coats, pearls, velvets, and rags, and bring confusion on the feast.

"And what became of the shrew?" queried the king, laying aside his pensive mien.

"Ah! sire," Rabelais replied, "therein was the Gargantuan gentleman unjust. He was put to death; but, inasmuch as he was of noble birth, he was beheaded. That was ill done, seeing that he was deceived."

"You go very far, good man," said the king.

"Nay, sire," Rabelais replied, "but very high. Have you not placed the pulpit above the crown? You called upon me to preach a sermon. And that have I done right evangelically."

"My fine court curé," said Madame Diane, in his ear, "suppose I were cruel?"

"Madame," said Rabelais, "is there not need, I prithee, to warn the king against the queen's Italians, who swarm here like cockchafers?"

"Poor preacher," said Cardinal Odet in his ear, "hasten to some foreign country."

"Ha! monseigneur," the goodman replied, "ere long I shall be in a very foreign country."

"*Vertu-Dieu*, master scribbler," said the constable, whose son, as everyone knows, had perfidiously abandoned Mademoiselle de Piennes, to whom he was betrothed, to marry Diane de France, daughter of a lady on this side of the mountains and the

king, "what hath made thee so bold as to aim at such exalted personages? Ha! vile poet, thou dost love to exalt thyself! 'Tis well; I pledge thee my word to raise thee exceeding high."

"We shall all come to it, monsieur le connétable," the goodman replied. "But, an you were a friend to State and king, you would thank me for having warned him of the proceedings of the Lorraines, who are rats to ruin all."

"My good friend," said the Cardinal Charles de Lorraine in his ear, "if there be need of a few gold crowns to bring forth thy fifth book of Pantagruel, they shall be counted out to thee by my treasurer, since thou hast told the truth to yonder old bitch, who hath bewitched the king, and to her pack."

"Well, messieurs," said the king, "what think you of this sermon?"

"Sire," said Melin de Saint-Gelays, seeing that all were well content, "never have I heard a better Pantagruelian prognostication. Well did that man owe it to us, who wrote these leonine verses in the abbey of Thelesme:

> "'Cy vous *entrez*, qui le Sainct Evangile
> En sens *agile* annoncez, quoy qu'on gronde,
> Céans *aurez* une refuge et bastille
> Contre *l'hostile* erreur qui tant postille
> Par son faux *style* empojsonner le monde.'"

All the courtiers being in a mood to applaud their neighbor, each one sang the praises of Rabelais, who hastily took his leave, accompanied, to do him honor,

by the king's pages, who, by express command, held torches for him.

Some there be who have accused François Rabelais, the imperial glory of our land, with malicious and monkeyish antics, unworthy of that philosophic Homer, of that prince of wisdom, of that paternal centre whence have issued, since the rising of his subterranean light, a goodly number of wondrous works. A fig for them who have defiled his divine head! May they find throughout their lives gravel between their teeth, who have failed to appreciate the wise and modest sustenance he offers!

Dear drinker of pure water, loyal servitor of monkish abstinence, twenty-five-carat scholar, with what sempiternal sneezing and laughter wouldst thou be seized if thou couldst but be young again for a brief space at Chinon, and couldst read the incongruous patching and piecing and cobbling of the idiots in flats and sharps who have interpreted, commented, distorted, disgraced, misunderstood, betrayed, murdered, adulterated, and embroidered thy unequalled work! As many as Panurge found of dogs tearing at his lady's gown in church, so many academic curs on two legs, with no brains in their heads, with no bowels in their bellies, have risen to besmirch thy lofty marble pyramid wherein is set forever in indestructible cement the seed of all fanciful and comical conceits, in addition to glorious enlightenment on every subject. Even though there be but few pilgrims with breath sufficient to follow thy bark through the ocean of human ideas,

methods, enigmas, religions, wisdom, and deceits, their incense is at the least pure and without alloy, and thy omnipotence, omniscience, and command of language are by them fairly recognized. Therefore hath an humble son of our joyous Touraine taken it upon himself to do thee justice, albeit in paltry fashion, by magnifying thy image and glorifying thy works of eternal memory, so cherished by them who love concentric works to which a universal moral is nailed fast, wherein we find, as tightly packed as fresh sardines in their boxes, all philosophical ideas whatsoever, all knowledge, art, eloquence, and theatrical mummeries as well.

THE SUCCUBA

PROLOGUE

Some persons of the noble province of Touraine, loyally aroused by the author's hot pursuit of the antiquities, adventures, pleasant pranks, and pretty conceits of that blessed province, believing that he must of a surety know everything, made inquiry of him, after drinking, be it understood, whether he had discovered the etymological reason whereof all the ladies of the town were very curious, and by reason whereof a street of Tours is called Rue Chaulde—Hot.—Whereunto he made answer that he marvelled much to see that many of the inhabitants had forgotten the great number of convents situated on said street, where the stern continence of the monks and nuns must needs have made the walls burn so, that some virtuous women were known to have become big from walking through the said street to Vespers somewhat slowly. A clown, seeking to play the scholar, declared that all the brothels of the city were once collected in that place. Another entangled himself in the niceties of learning and talked gold, but without being understood, analyzing words, harmonizing the melodies of the ancient and modern,

assembling customs, distilling verbs, dissolving by alchemy all tongues since the Deluge, Hebrew, Chaldean, Egyptian, Greek, Latin, down to Turnus who founded Tours; whereupon the goodman concluded by saying that *Chauld*, less the *H* and *L*, came from *Cauda*,—tail,—and that there was a tail in this affair; but the ladies heard only the end.

An old man said that there was once a spring of hot water in that spot, of which his great-great-grandfather had drunk. In short, in less time than a fly would take to embrace his neighbor, there was a pocketful of etymologies, wherein 'twould have been more difficult to find the truth than to find a flea in a Capuchin's dirty beard. But a learned man, renowned for having set his foot in divers monasteries, burned much oil at night, devoured more than one volume, and collected a greater store of papers, fragments of diptychs, boxes, charters, and records touching the history of Touraine, than ever a farmer barns of wisps of straw in August; the which old man, bent and gouty, drank in his corner without speaking, smiled a scholar's smile, and smacked his lips, the which smile resolved itself into a *Pshaw!* most distinct, the which the author heard and well knew that 'twas heavy with some rich historical adventure, whereof he might unfold the charms in this pleasant Collection.

And on the morrow this gouty fellow said to him:

"By your poem, whereof the title is the *Venial Sin*, you have forever won my esteem, forasmuch as everything is true therein from top to toe, the

which I esteem a priceless superabundance in such matters. But methinks you know not what befell the gipsy maiden who was made a nun by Sieur Bruyn de la Roche-Corbon? But I well know her fate. And so, if the etymology of the street-name doth vex you, and your gipsy nun likewise, I will e'en lend you a curious and antique record by me found in the *Olim* of the archbishopric, whereof the libraries were somewhat shaken up at a time when no one of us could say at night, whether his head would still be on his shoulders on the morrow. Now, will not this give you perfect content?"

"Even so!" said the author.

Thereupon did this worthy gleaner of facts deliver to the author divers precious dusty parchments, the which he hath, not without great labor, translated into the French, being very ancient documents of ecclesiastical procedure. It hath seemed to him that naught could be more entertaining than the actual resurrection of this ancient affair, wherein the artless ignorance of the good old days is plainly manifest. Give ear, therefore! In this order were these writings, whereof the author hath made use as to him hath seemed best, for that the language thereof was diabolically hard.

I

WHAT A SUCCUBA WAS

† *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, before me, HIEROME CORNILLE, Grand Penitentiary, Ecclesiastical Judge,—thereto commissioned by the Chapter of Saint-Maurice, Cathedral of Tours, having considered hereof in presence of Monseigneur Jehan de Monsoreau, Archbishop, concerning the wrongs and complaints of the inhabitants of the city, whose petition will be subjoined hereto,—appeared divers nobles, bourgeois, and villeins of the diocese, who made oath of the facts hereinafter set forth touching the actions of a demon, suspected of having assumed the features of a woman, which said demon doth much torment the good people of the diocese, and is at this time immured in the prison of the Chapter; and, to arrive at the truth concerning the said complaints, we have opened the present hearing, this Monday, December the eleventh, after mass, to the end that the testimony of all the witnesses be communicated to the said demon, and that she be interrogated touching the said acts to her imputed, and that she be tried according to the laws against *dæmonios*.

In this inquiry, Guillaume Tournebouche, rubrician of the Chapter, hath aided me, by writing all the evidence.

First appeared before us, Jehan, called Tortebras, bourgeois of Tours, keeper, by license, of the hostelry of La Cigoygne on Place du Pont, who swore on the salvation of his soul, with his hand on the Holy Gospels, to offer naught save that which hath by himself been seen and heard. Whereupon, he deposed what follows:

"I declare that, about two years before the Saint Jehan's Day, when the great illuminations took place, a nobleman, to me at first unknown, but of a surety belonging to the suite of our lord the king, and then just returned to our province from the Holy Land, came to my house to propose to me that I should rent to him a country house by me erected in the domain of the Chapter, hard by the place called Saint-Etienne, and which I rented to him for nine years in consideration of three bezants of fine gold.

"In the said house the said nobleman bestowed a lovely wench, wearing the aspect of a woman, clad after the strange fashion of the Saracens and Mahometans, whom he would not allow anyone to see or to approach within a bow-shot, but I have seen with my eyes strange plumage on her head, a supernatural color, and eyes more flaming than I can say, from whence flashed forth flames of hell.

"The chevalier, now deceased, having threatened with death whosoever should seem to pry about

the said house, I did, through great fear, abandon the said house, and I have to this day kept in my heart divers presumptions and suspicions touching the evil aspect of the said foreign woman, who was so gamesome that no such woman had ever before been seen by me.

"Divers people of all stations, having at that time believed the said chevalier to be dead, and that he remained on his feet by virtue of divers charms, philters, sorceries, and diabolical magic of that semblance of a woman, who desired to live in our province, I declare that the said chevalier always seemed to me so pale that I was fain to compare his face to the wax of a Paschal taper; and, to the knowledge of all the people at the hostelry of La Cigoygne, the chevalier was put in the ground nine days after his coming. According to his esquire, the deceased had cohabited hotly with the said Moorish woman during seven whole days, confined in my house, without once coming forth, the which I heard him confess in horror on his death-bed.

"At that time, it was said by some that this she-devil bound the said nobleman to her by her long hair, the which was endowed with inciting properties whereby the fires of hell are communicated to Christians under the guise of love, and they are made to work until their souls are, by these means, torn from their bodies and acquired by Satan. But I declare that I saw naught save the chevalier dead, worn out, shrunken, unable to stir, striving, despite his confessor, to go again to his wench; and he was

recognized as the Lord of Bueil, who had been to the Crusade, and had fallen, so said some in the city, under the spell of a demon, which demon he had met in the Asiatic province of Damascus or in some other place.

"Thereafter, I left my house in the possession of the said unknown woman, according to the provisions of the lease. When the said Lord of Bueil died, I went to my said house to learn from the said foreign woman if she wished to remain therein; and, after much difficulty, was led before her by a strange half-naked man, black and with white eyes. Then saw I the said Moorish woman in a room gleaming with gold and precious gems, lighted by many lights, on an Asian rug, where she sat, lightly clad, with another nobleman, who was risking his soul; nor was my heart strong enough to look upon her, seeing that her eyes would have incited me to give myself to her at once, for her voice already crackled in my belly, filled my brain, and debauched my mind. Which hearing, from the fear of God and of hell, I turned and fled, leaving my house to her so long as she might choose to keep it, so perilous it was to look upon that Moorish skin whence a devilish heat came forth, added to a foot smaller than a woman may lawfully have, and to listen to her voice, which bored into the heart; and from that day have dared visit my house no more, for fear of falling into hell. I have said."

With the said Tortebras we then confronted an Abyssinian, Ethiopian, or Nubian, black from head

to foot, who was deprived of the virile parts wherewith all Christians are commonly supplied, and who, having persisted in keeping silent after being tortured and tormented several times, not without much groaning, was convicted of being unable to speak the language of our country. And the said Tortebras recognized the said heretical Abyssinian as having been in his house, in company with the said demoniacal spirit, and suspected of having lent his aid in the incantations.

And the said Tortebras avowed his great faith in the Catholic religion, and declared that he knew nothing further save divers rumors which were known to all others, and to which he had in nowise been witness, unless by having heard them.

In obedience to a summons duly delivered, one Mathieu, called Cognefestu, next came forward, a day-laborer at Saint-Etienne, who, after swearing on the Holy Gospels to speak truly, deposed that he had always seen a bright light in the said foreign woman's house, heard much uproarious and devilish laughter on the days and nights of feasts and fast-days, notably on the days of Holy Week and Christmas, as if a goodly number of persons were in the house. Also that he saw, at the windows of said house, green things of all sorts growing magically in the winter, especially roses, during a heavy frost, and other things for which great heat is needed; but thereat he marvelled not, forasmuch as the said foreign woman gave forth so much heat, that, when she walked to Vespers by his wall, he found his

lettuces sprouted on the morrow, and that, sometimes, by brushing with her skirts, she had brought the sap forth from the trees and hastened the budding. And, lastly, the said Cognefestu deposed that he knew nothing more, inasmuch as he worked in the fields from morning till night and went to bed when the hens sought their perches.

Then the wife of said Cognefestu was ordered by us, after being duly sworn, to tell such things as had come to her knowledge in this affair, and deposed that she knew naught but in praise of the said foreign woman, for that since her coming, her man treated her more kindly by reason of the neighborhood of that good creature who spread love through the air as the sun spreads its light, and other unworthy follies which we have not here set down.

With the said Cognefestu and his wife we confronted the said unknown African, who hath been seen by them in the gardens of the house, and reputed by them to belong of a surety to the said demon.

In the third place appeared Messire Harduin V., Lord of Maillé, who, being by us reverentially requested to enlighten the Church and the faith, responded that such was his pleasure, and furthermore pledged his faith as a true knight to testify to no other thing than he himself had seen.

Thereupon, he deposed that he had known the demon in question in the Crusaders' army. Thereafter, in the city of Damascus, saw the Lord of Bueil, now deceased, engage in single combat for

the privilege of being her sole possessor. The said wench or demon then appertained to Geoffroy IV., Lord of La Roche-Pozay, who used to say that he had brought her from Touraine, albeit she was a Saracen; whereat the gentlemen of France marvelled greatly, no less than at her beauty, which made much noise and wrought much scandalous havoc in the camp. During the journey, this wench was the cause of several murders, since La Roche-Pozay had then vanquished several Crusaders who wished to keep her for themselves alone, seeing that, according to certain nobles whom she had rewarded in secret, she gave pleasure beyond compare. But, finally, the Sire de Bueil, having slain Geoffroy de la Roche-Pozay, became lord and master of this fair murderess and confined her in a convent or harem after the Saracen fashion. Theretofore, they used to see her and hear her chattering in her merry-makings numberless dialects of over-sea, Arabic, Greek of the Roman Empire, Moorish, and, more than all, French, like no one of those who best knew the tongues of France in the Christian host, whence came the belief that she was much possessed by the devil.

The said Sire Harduin deposed that he entered not the lists for her in the Holy Land, not from fear, indifference, or other motive; wherefore, he thought that that good-fortune came to him because he carried always a bit of the True Cross, and likewise because he had a noble lady of Greece, who saved him from that danger by stripping him bare of love

morning and night, forasmuch as she took from him substantially all, leaving nothing in his heart or elsewhere for others.

And the said nobleman was assured that the woman domiciled in Tortebras's country house is in very truth the said Saracen who came from Syria, inasmuch as he had been bidden to a revel at her house by the young Sire de Croixmare, who died the seventh day thereafter,—so said the Dame de Croixmare, his mother,—utterly ruined by the said wench, whose intercourse had consumed all his vital forces, and whose strange caprices had squandered his crowns.

Thereupon, being questioned, as a man of prudence, wisdom, and authority in this province, touching his opinion of the said woman, and being adjured by us to search his conscience, inasmuch as a most abominable case was in hearing, involving the Christian faith and divine justice, the said nobleman replied:

That by some in the Crusaders' host it had been said that this she-devil was always a virgin to whomsoever bestrode her, and that of a surety Mammon was within her, engaged in fashioning her anew for each of her lovers, and a thousand other mad sayings of men drunk with wine, which were not fit matter whereof to make a fifth gospel. But certain it was that he, an aged knight, on the downward path of life and no longer knowing aught of the matter, had felt that he was a young man once more at this last supper wherewith the Sire de Croixmare

had regaled him; that the demon's voice had gone straight to his heart before entering at his ears, and had planted such ardent love in his body, that his life all rushed to the spot whence it is given; and that, to conclude, but for the succor of the Cyprus wine which he had drunk to close his eyes and lie under the benches, that he might no longer see his diabolical hostess's flaming eyes, nor suffer torments by her means, he would beyond a peradventure have killed young Croixmare to the end that he might enjoy that superhuman creature a single time. He had not failed, since then, to confess that evil thought. Then, by counsel from on high, had taken from his wife his relic of the True Cross and had dwelt in his own manor-house, where, notwithstanding these Christianlike precautions, the said voice did sometimes tinkle in his brain, and often, in the morning, there came to his mind the memory of that buxom she-devil, ardent as tinder. And forasmuch as the sight of that wench was so inciting that it made him, half dead as he was, burn like a young man, and as it cost him much waste of vital energy, the said nobleman besought us not to confront him with that empress of love, to whom, an she were not the devil, God the Father had granted strange power over things masculine. Then did he withdraw, after reading these statements, not without recognizing the aforesaid African as the lady's servant and page.

In the fourth place, upon the assurance given by us, in the name of the Chapter and of our lord the archbishop, that he should not be tortured, disturbed,

or molested in any respect or in any wise, or be summoned before us again after his deposition, because of the journeyings incident to his commerce, and upon the assurance that he should have full liberty to retire, appeared a Jew, by name Salomon al Rastchild, who, notwithstanding his Judaism and the infamy of his person, was heard by us, to the sole end of learning all concerning the acts of the aforesaid demon. Nor was the said Salomon required to take any oath, inasmuch as he is without the pale of the Church, separated from us by the blood of our Saviour—*trucidatus Salvator inter nos*.

Being questioned wherefore he appeared without the green cap on his head and the yellow wheel set in his garment over the heart, according to the ecclesiastical and royal ordinances, the said Al Rastchild did set before us letters patent of dispensation, granted by our lord the king, and countersigned by the seneschal of Poitou and Touraine.

Thereupon, the said Jew deposed that he had had many dealings with the lady domiciled in the house of the innkeeper Tortebras, had sold her many-branched chandeliers of gold cunningly engraved, plates of silver-gilt, goblets enriched with precious stones, emeralds, and rubies; had brought for her from the Levant a goodly number of valuable stuffs, Persian rugs, silks, and fine linens,—in a word, objects of such magnificence that no queen in Christendom could say that she was so well supplied with trinkets and household utensils; and that he had received from her three hundred thousand Tours

livres for the choice wares in the purchase whereof he had been engaged, as flowers from the Indies, parrots, and other birds, feathers, spices, Greek wines, and diamonds.

Being ordered by us, the judge, to say if he had supplied her with any ingredients of magic compounds, blood of new-born babes, and all things generally whatsoever that sorcerers use, giving him full liberty to avow the truth without fear of being ever molested or prosecuted therefor, the said Al Rastchild pledged his faith as a Jew that he dealt in no such wares. And further he deposed that the interests by him represented were by far too important to allow him to stoop to such paltry matters, inasmuch as he was the jeweller to divers most potent lords, as the Marquis de Montferrat, the King of England, the King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, the Comte de Provence, my lords of Venice, and others in Germany; that he had merchant galleons of all sorts, sailing to Egypt, under the sultan's safe-conduct, and that he carried on a traffic in valuable things of gold and silver which led him often to the mint at Tours. And further he deposed that he esteemed the said female now in cause to be a most loyal and natural woman, the most graceful and sweetest in face and figure that he had ever seen. That, by reason of her fame as one possessed by the devil, impelled by a flighty imagination, and likewise because he was enamored of her, he had, on a certain day when she was loverless, proposed to be her lover, to the which suggestion she assented.

Now, albeit he had long felt his bones disjointed and his loins enervated by that night, he had not found, as certain ones asserted, that what falls once rises no more, but melts like lead in an alchemist's crucible.

Thereupon, the said Salomon, to whom we accorded his liberty, according to the safe-conduct, despite this testimony which amply proves his commerce with the devil, forasmuch as he came forth unharmed where Christians succumbed, submitted to us a proposal touching the said demon. To wit: that he made offer to the Chapter of the cathedral to furnish for the said semblance of a woman, if she were sentenced to be burned alive, such a ransom that the highest of the towers of the church of Saint-Maurice now building could be completed.

The which proposal we have noted here, to be in due season laid before the assembled Chapter for their consideration. And the said Salomon withdrew, refusing to inform us of his abode, and said to us that he could be informed of the decision of the Chapter through a Jew of the Jewish quarter of Tours, by name Tobias Nathaneus. With the said Jew, before his departure, was confronted the African, whom he recognized for the demon's page. And he deposed that the Saracens are wont thus to deprive their slaves of manhood, in order to set them to watch over women, by an ancient custom, as appears from the profane historians in relation to Narsez, general of Constantinople, and others.

On the morrow, after the mass, appeared before

us, in the fifth place, the most noble and illustrious Dame de Croixmare, who pledged her faith upon the Holy Gospels, and deposed, with much weeping, that she had interred her oldest son, dead by reason of his frenzied commerce with a female demon. The which noble youth was twenty-three years of age, of perfect complexion, very strong, and bearded heavily like his deceased father. His great manly vigor notwithstanding, in ninety days he had gradually pined away, ruined by his commerce with the succuba of Rue Chaulde, as she was called by the common people; and of no avail had been her maternal authority over her said son. And, finally, in his last day, he seemed like a poor, withered worm, of the sort that housewives find in corners when they sweep their floors. Still, as long as he had strength to do so, he went to end his life with that accursed creature, with whom, likewise, he squandered his savings. And when, as he lay in bed, he saw his last hour drawing nigh, he swore, blasphemed, threatened, heaped insults on them all, on sister, brother, and on her, his mother; spat in the almoner's face; denied God and would die as one damned; by all of which were the retainers of the family sore afflicted, who, to save his soul and rescue him from hell, have founded two yearly masses in the cathedral. And, in order that he might be interred in consecrated ground, the house of Croixmare hath bound itself to give for one hundred years to the Chapter the wax for church and chapels on Palm-Sunday. And, to conclude, the

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aforesaid lady deposed that, save for the wicked words heard by the godly Dom Loys Pot, a monk of Marmoustiers, who came to give consolation in his last hours to the said Baron de Croixmare, she heard no words uttered by the deceased concerning the demon who had undone him.

And with that the noble and illustrious lady withdrew in great affliction.

In the sixth place appeared before us upon summons Jacquette, called Vieulx-Oing, scullery-wench, washer of dishes in divers houses, at present domiciled at La Poissonnerie, who, after making oath to say naught which she believed not to be true, deposed that which follows. To wit: that, on a certain day, having gone to the kitchen of the said demon, of whom she was in nowise afraid, forasmuch as the said demon preyed upon males alone, she had had leisure to watch this female demon, superbly clad, walking in the garden in company with a gallant with whom she laughed like a natural woman. Thereupon, she had recognized in the said demon a perfect resemblance to the Moorish woman consigned as a nun to the convent of Notre-Dame de l'Esgrignolles by the deceased seneschal of Touraine and Poitou, Messire Bruyn, Comte de la Roche-Corbon, the which Moorish woman had been left in the stead and place of Our Lady the Virgin, mother of our Blessed Saviour, stolen by the gipsies about eighteen years before. In those days whereof there is no record, because of the commotions in Touraine, this damsel, aged twelve years, was saved

from the stake, whereat she was destined to be burned, by receiving baptism, and the said defunct seneschal and his defunct lady had been godfather and godmother to that child of hell. Being laundress at the convent in those days, this deponent remembered the flight of the said Moorish woman, twenty months after her taking the veil, a flight so subtly planned that no one hath ever known where or how she made her escape. Therefore was it believed by one and all that she had flown away through the air, with the devil's aid, forasmuch as, after most diligent search, no trace of her passage was found within the convent, where everything remained in its accustomed place.

The African having been confronted with the said scullery-wench, she deposed that she had never seen him, albeit she was curious to do so, for the reason that he was set as guard over the place where the Moorish woman fought with those whom she squeezed through the spigot.

In the seventh place, there was brought before us Hugues du Fou, son of the Sieur de Bridoré, who, being twenty years of age, hath been placed in the hands of his father on the pledge of his seignory; and was by him represented in this cause to have been duly accused and convicted of having, with the assistance of divers unknown evil-minded youth, besieged the prison of the archbishop and Chapter, and of having striven to turn aside the course of ecclesiastical justice by effecting the escape of the said demon now in cause. Despite his unwillingness,

we ordered the said Hugues du Fou to depose truthfully touching those things which he might know of the said demon, with whom he was universally reputed to have had commerce; urging upon him that his welfare and the life of said demoniac were at stake. Who, after making oath, deposed:

"I swear by my everlasting salvation and by the Holy Gospels, here present under my hand, that I hold the woman suspected of being a demon to be an angel, a perfect woman, in heart and soul even more than in body; living in all virtue; overflowing with the charms and refinements of love; in nowise wicked, but generous, assisting much the poor and suffering. I declare that I have seen her weeping real tears for the death of my friend, the Sire de Croixmare. And, for the reason that on that day she made a vow to Our Lady the Virgin no more to grant the favors of love to young noblemen too weak for her service, she hath constantly and with great courage denied me the enjoyment of her body, and hath granted me naught save love and the possession of her heart, whereof she hath made me suzerain. And since that gracious gift, despite my growing flame, hath lived alone in her house, where I have spent a great part of my days, happy to see her and listen to her. Yea, I eat by her side, partaking of the air that enters her throat, the light that shines in her lovely eyes, finding therein more delight than souls in paradise know. Chosen by me to be my lady forever; chosen to be, some day, my dove, my wife and only mistress, I, poor fool, have

received from her naught in earnest of the joys to come, but, on the contrary, much virtuous advice: as that I must acquire the renown of a goodly knight, become a strong and comely man; fear naught save God; honor the ladies, serve but one, and love them all in memory of that one; and when I shall have been tempered by the toils of war, then only, if her heart be still dear to mine, will she be mine; for that she will be strong to wait for me, loving me most fondly."

Thus saying, young Sire Hugues wept, and, weeping, added:

That, thinking of that gracious, feeble woman, whose arms seemed to him but now too slender to support the slight weight of her golden bracelets, he had been unable to contain himself at thought of the fetters that galled her flesh and of the vile things whereof she was traitorously accused; and that thence had come his rebellion. And that he was privileged to tell his grief to the face of Justice, forasmuch as his life was so fast bound to that of his sweet mistress and friend, that, on the day when evil should befall her, he should die of a surety.

And the aforesaid young nobleman declaimed a thousand other eulogies of the said demon, which bore witness to the energy of the bedevilment practised upon him and amply proved the abominable, shameless, incurable life and the fraudulent sorcery to which he is resigned, whereof our lord the archbishop will judge, to the end that that youthful soul may be saved by exorcisms and penance from the

snares of hell, if the devil hath not gone too far therein.

Thereupon, we restored the said youth to the hands of the noble lord his father, after that by the said Hugues the African was recognized as the servitor of the accused.

In the eighth place the apparitors of our lord the archbishop brought before us, with much honor, the MOST HIGH AND REVEREND DAME JACQUELINE DE CHAMPCHEVRIER, ABBESS OF THE CONVENT OF NOTRE-DAME, under the invocation of Mount Carmel, in whose custody was placed by the late seneschal of Touraine, father of Monseigneur le Comte de la Roche-Corbon, now solicitor of the said convent, the gipsy woman baptized by the name of Blanche Bruyn.

To the said lady abbess we briefly summarized the present cause, wherein the Holy Church and the glory of God are involved, likewise the happiness of the people of this diocese afflicted by a demon, and the life of a creature who might possibly be innocent of any wrong. Whereupon, the cause being laid bare, we prayed the said lady abbess to depose such facts as were within her knowledge touching the magic disappearance of her daughter in God, Blanche Bruyn, espoused by our Saviour under the name of Sister Claire.

And the most noble, most exalted, and most puissant lady abbess deposed as follows:

Sister Claire, whose origin was to her unknown, but suspected of being born of a father and mother

who were heretics and enemies of God, had been in very truth consigned to the convent whereof the government had canonically fallen to her, despite her unworthiness; the said sister had duly accomplished her novitiate and taken the vows according to the consecrated rules of the Order. Then, having taken the vows, had fallen into great melancholy and had faded greatly. Being by her, the abbess, questioned touching her melancholy sickness, the said sister had answered with tears that she knew not in anywise the cause; that it engendered in her floods of tears to feel no more her beautiful hair on her head; that, furthermore, she thirsted for air, could not resist her longings to leap into the trees, to climb and caper about as was her custom in her out-door life; that she passed her nights in tears, dreaming of the forests beneath the foliage whereof she once was wont to sleep; and, remembering that, she abhorred the quality of the convent air which troubled her respiration; that evil vapors rumbled within her, and that at times she was inwardly diverted in church by thoughts which made her lose countenance. Then did the abbess encourage the poor child with the blessed teachings of the Church, recalled to her memory the joy eternal which women without sin enjoy in paradise, and how transitory was our life here below, and how sure the loving-kindness of God, who, in return for a few bitter joys lost, loved us with an unending love. Despite these wise and motherly counsels, the evil spirit in the said sister persisted. And she would always gaze

at the leaves of the trees, the grass in the fields, through the windows of the church, during the offices and the time of prayer; persisted, too, in turning pale as linen from sheer mischief, to the end that she might remain in her bed; and sometimes scampered through the cloister like a kid escaped from its stake. Latterly, she grew thin, lost her great beauty, and became a mere nothing. Now, in this perplexity, we the abbess, her mother, fearing to see her die, she was by us lodged in the apartment of the sick. One winter's morning, the said sister took flight, leaving no traces of her steps, no doors forced, locks broken, nor windows open, nor anything whatsoever whereby her passage was indicated: a shocking adventure, which was esteemed to have taken place by the aid of the demon who tortured and tormented her. For the rest, it was concluded by the authorities of the Metropolitan Church that that child of hell had had it in charge to turn aside the nuns from the blessed paths, and, all dazzled by their noble life, had returned through the air to the revels of the sorcerers who had left her, in mockery of our holy religion, in the place of the Virgin Mary.

Having said, the lady abbess was escorted to the convent of Mount Carmel, with great honor, and according to the behests of our lord the archbishop.

In the ninth place before us came, upon summons to him delivered, Joseph, called Leschalopier, money-changer, living above the bridge, at the sign of the *Bezant d'Or*, who, having sworn upon his faith as

Catholic to tell nothing but the truth known by him touching the cause in hearing before the ecclesiastical tribunal, deposed as follows:

"I am a poor man, sore afflicted by the blessed will of God. Before the coming of the succuba of Rue Chaulde, I had for my only treasure a son, comely as one of noble birth, learned as a clerk, having made journeys more than twelve to foreign lands; for the rest, a good Catholic; holding himself aloof from the incitements of love, for that he was averse to marriage, knowing himself to be the staff of my old age, the love of my eyes, and the constant joy of my heart. He was a son whereof a king of France would have been proud, a good and brave man, the light of my commerce, the joy of my roof, and, in a word, an inestimable treasure, forasmuch as I am alone in this world, having had the evil fortune to lose my helpmeet and to be too old to make another myself. Now, monseigneur, hath this peerless treasure been taken from me and consigned to hell by the demon. Yes, my lord judge, when his eyes beheld that sheath for a thousand knives, that she-devil, in whom all is the gateway to perdition, a blending of merriment and delectation, and whom naught can satiate, my poor child was instantly caught fast in the birdlime of her love, and since lives only between the pillars of Venus, nor lives he there for long, because in that place abides so great heat that nothing can slake the thirst of that gulf, even if you should stuff therein the germs of the whole world. And so, alas! my poor boy, his

purse, his generative hopes, his eternal happiness, his all, more than his all, is swallowed up in that cavity like a grain of corn in the jaws of a bull. And thus shall I who now address you, an aged orphan, have no other joy hereafter than to see that gold and blood-fed demon burned alive, that Arachne, who hath bedevilled, hath sucked the sap of more marriages, more families in germ, more hearts, more Christians than there be lepers in all the lazar-houses of Christendom. Burn, torture that ghoul, that vampire who feeds on souls; that tiger nature that drinks blood; that amorous lamp wherein boils the venom of all vipers. Close that abyss whereof no man can find the bottom.—I offer my *deniers* to the Chapter for the stake, my arm to stir the fire. Look to it, my lord judge, that you bind this devil fast, for she hath fire hotter than all other earthly fires. She hath the fire of hell in her lap, the strength of Samson in her hair, and the semblance of divine music in her voice. She charms in order to kill soul and body at one stroke; she smiles to bite; she kisses to devour; in fine, she would entangle a saint in her skirts and make him deny God. My son! my son! Where at this hour is the flower of my life, a flower cut off by that female case as by scissors! Ah! my lord, why have summoned me? Who will give me back my son, whose soul hath been absorbed by a belly which gives death to all and life to none? The devil alone copulates but doth not engender. Such is my testimony, which I pray Master Tournebouche to write down

without omitting one iota, and then to give me a copy thereof, that I may say it to God every night in my prayers and thus keep always crying in His ears the blood of innocence, and obtain from His infinite mercy the pardon of my son."

Followed seven and twenty other depositions, the which to transcribe in their entirety and in all their space-filling qualities would be most tedious, would occupy overmuch time, and would turn us aside from the thread of this strange process; a tale which should, according to the ancient precepts, go straight to the facts like a bull to his chief duty. Here follows, therefore, in brief, the marrow of these depositions:

By a great number of good Christians, bourgeois and bourgeoises, dwellers in the noble city of Tours, it was said: that the demon aforesaid every day feasted and made merry royally; had never been seen in any church; had cursed God; had mocked at His priests; had never crossed herself in any place; spake all the languages of the earth, the which power God hath granted to none but His Holy Apostles; had been many times met in the fields, mounted upon an unknown animal, which moved faster than the clouds; grew not old and was ever young of face; had unbound her girdle for the father and the son in one and the same day, saying that her gate sinned not; possessed manifest malign influences which exhaled from her, for that a pastry-cook, seated on his bench at a door, having espied her one evening, received such a blast of ardent

love, that, entering his house, he went to bed, did, in a great frenzy, embrace his wife, and was found dead the next day, still at his task; that the old men of the city went to spend the remnant of their days and their crowns in her workshop, to taste the joy of the sins of their youth, and that they died like flies, with their backs turned skyward, and that some, when dying, turned black as Moors; that this demon did not show herself at dinner, nor at breakfast, nor at supper, but ate always alone, forasmuch as she lived on human brains; that some had seen her, during the night, go to graveyards, and there embrace dead youths, for that she could not otherwise appease the devil that rioted in her entrails and raged there like a tempest; and that thence came the boracinous, astringent, biting, nitrogenous, shooting, rushing, diabolic movements, hugs, contortions of love and lust, whence many men came forth distorted, leaden-hued, spiritless, bitten, and bruised; and that, since the coming of our Saviour, who had confined the master devil in the swine, in no place on earth had malignant beast been seen so maleficent, so poisonous, so all-embracing, and this to such degree that were the city of Tours thrown into that field of Venus 'twould be transformed into the seed of cities and the demon would swallow it like a strawberry.

And many other sayings, testimonies, and depositions, whence issued in all certainty the infernal generation of that woman, daughter, sister, grandame, spouse, wench, or brother of the devil, in

addition to the abundant proofs of her evil-doing and of the calamities by her brought upon all families. And, were license given to set them forth herein, conformably to the list preserved by the goodman to whom the discovery is due, it would seem a specimen of the ghastly shrieks uttered by the Egyptians on the day of the seventh plague. And so hath this process done much honor to Messer Guillaume Tournebouche, by whom were all the statements noted down.

At the tenth adjournment, this inquest was closed, having reached its full maturity of proof, and being furnished with authentic testimonies, duly amplified with details, complaints, interdicts, denials, charges, assignations, cross-examinations, confessions public and private, oaths, summonses, confrontations, and controversies, whereto the demon must make reply. So that all the bourgeois said that, an she were really a she-devil, and supplied with interior horns planted in her nature, wherewith she drank men and crushed them, that woman must needs swim a long while in this sea of documents before reaching hell safe and sound.

II

WHAT PROCEEDINGS WERE TAKEN IN THE MATTER OF THIS FEMALE DEMON

† *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, before us, HIEROME CORNILLE, Grand Penitentiary and Ecclesiastical Judge, hereto canonically commissioned, appeared:

Sire Philippe d'Ydré, bailiff of the city of Tours and province of Touraine, dwelling in his house, Rue de la Rôtisserie, in Châteauneuf; Master Jehan Ribou, provost of the free guild of Drapers, dwelling on Quai de Bretaingne, at the sign of *Saint Pierre ez liens;* Messire Antoine Jahan, sheriff, master of the guild of Money-changers, dwelling on Place du Pont, at the sign of *Saint Marc comptant des livres tournoys;* Master Martin Maupertuis, captain of the archers of the city, dwelling at the château; Jehan Rabelais, ship's caulker and boat-builder, dwelling at the port of Ile Saint-Jacques, treasurer of the guild of Boatmen of the Loire; Marc Hiérome, called Maschefer, hosier, at the sign of *Sainte-Sébastienne,* president of the *Preudhommes;* and Jacques, called de Ville d'Omer, master tavern-keeper and vine-dresser, dwelling on the high street,

at the sign of the *Pomme de Pin;* to the which Sire d'Ydré, bailiff, and to the which bourgeois of Tours, we did read the petition following, by them written, signed, and duly considered, to be laid before the ecclesiastical tribunal:

" PETITION

" We, the undersigned, bourgeois of Tours all, have come together at the house of our lord the Sire d'Ydré, bailiff of Touraine, in the absence of our mayor, and have desired him to hearken to our grievances and complaints touching the facts herein stated, whereof we demand that cognizance be taken by the archbishop's tribunal, the judge of offences ecclesiastical, to whom should be referred the trial of the cause which we set forth.

" Long since there came to this city an evil demon in the guise of a woman, who lives in the village of Saint-Etienne, in the house of the publican Tortebras, situated in the domain of the Chapter, and under the temporal jurisdiction of the archiepiscopal tribunal. The which foreign woman plies the trade of harlot in treacherous and shameless fashion, and with such increase of evil-doing that she threatens to destroy the Catholic faith in this city, forasmuch as they who go to her return with their souls utterly lost and refuse the succor of the Church, with much scandalous blasphemy.

" Now, whereas a great number of those who give themselves to her are dead, and, whereas, having come to our city without other goods than nature

gave her, she now hath, so public rumor saith, boundless wealth, royal treasures, whereof her acquisition is strongly suspected of sorcery, if not of theft committed by aid of the magic charms of her supernaturally amorous person;

"Whereas the honor and welfare of our families are at stake; for never in this land hath been seen a woman mad of her body, or a girl of love, plying with such woful havoc her trade of harlot, and threatening so openly and shamelessly the life, fortune, morals, chastity, religion, and the all of the people of this city;

"Whereas, there is occasion for an inquest of her person, her possessions, and her conduct, to the end that it may be known whether these effects of love are natural and proceed not, as her acts prove, from some malefice of Satan, who doth often visit Christendom in female guise, as appears from the holy books, wherein it is said that our blessed Saviour was carried up into a mountain, from whence Lucifer or Astaroth pointed out to Him fertile domains in Judea, and that in many places have been seen succubæ or demons, having women's features, who, not wishing to return to hell and retaining in their bodies an insatiable fire, seek to cool and sustain themselves by inhaling souls;

"Whereas, in the case of the said woman there be numberless testimonies of bedevilment, whereof some citizens speak openly, and whereas it is well for the said woman's repose that the matter should be laid bare, to the end that she be not attacked

by certain ones who have been ruined by her evil-doing;

"For these and other causes we pray that it may please you to lay before our spiritual lord, father of this diocese, the most noble and saintly Archbishop Jehan de Monsoreau, the grievances of his afflicted lambs, to the end that he may take them into consideration.

"So doing, you will fulfil the duties of your office, as well as that of conservators of the safety of this city, each according to those things whereof he hath charge in his quarter.

"And we have signed these presents, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, on the day of All the Saints, after mass."

Master Tournebouche having finished the reading of this petition, we, Hiérome Cornille, spake thus to the petitioners:

"Messires, do you persist in these charges, have you other proofs than those heretofore brought to our knowledge, and do you bind yourselves to maintain the truth hereof before God, before man, and before the accused?"

All, save only Messire Jehan Rabelais, persisted in their belief, and the aforesaid Rabelais withdrew from the cause, saying that he esteemed the said Moor a natural woman and an honest wench who had no other fault than that she retained an exceeding high temperature of love.

Thereupon, we, the judge hereto commissioned, after mature deliberation, do find cause to act upon

the petition of the said bourgeois, and we do order that such steps be taken in the matter of the woman confined in the prison of the Chapter as are written in the canons and ordinances against *dæmonios*.

Our said order, being reduced to the form of a decree, shall be published by the town-crier in all public places, and with sound of trumpet, to the end that it may be known of all, and that every man may bear witness according to his conscience, may be confronted with the said demon, and, finally, that the said accused may be provided with a defender, according to custom, and that the examination and procedure may be in proper form conducted.

Signed:

HIEROME CORNILLE.

And below:

TOURNEBOUCHE.

† *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, on the tenth day of February, after mass, by virtue of a decree issued by us, HIEROME CORNILLE, Ecclesiastical Judge, hath been taken from the prison of the Chapter and brought before us the woman seized in the house of the publican Tortebras, situated in the domain of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Saint-Maurice, and therefore subject to the temporal and seignorial jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Tours, albeit, by reason of the

nature of the crimes imputed to her, she is subject and answerable to the ecclesiastic tribunal, the which we have caused to be made known to her, to the end that she might know it.

Then, after solemn reading, omitting naught, and well understood by her: firstly, of the Petition of the townspeople; secondly, of the statements, complaints, accusations, and decrees written in twenty-two folios by Master Tournebouche, and hereinabove set forth, we did proceed, under the invocation and aid of God and the Church, to seek the truth, first by questions propounded to the accused.

By our first question, we called upon the said accused to tell us in what country or town she was born. By her who spake was answer made:

"In Mauritania."

Then did we ask if she had father, mother, or any kindred. By her who spake was answer made that she had never known them.

By us was she summoned to state what name was hers. By her who spake was answer made:

"Zulma, in the Arabian tongue."

By us was she asked why she spake our language. By her who spake was answer made:

"For the reason that she had come to this country."

By us was asked:

"At what time?"

By her who spake was answer made:

"About twelve years since."

By us was asked what was her age at that time.

By her who spake was answer made:

"Fifteen years, or little less."

By us was asked:

"In that case, you admit that you are now seven-and-twenty?"

By her who spake was answer made:

"Yes."

Whereupon, by us was she told that she was of a surety the Moorish woman found in the niche of the Blessed Virgin, baptized thereafter by the archbishop, held at the baptismal font by the late Sire de la Roche-Corbon and Demoiselle d'Azay, his spouse; thereafter placed by them in the convent of Mount Carmel, where vows of chastity, poverty, silence, and love of God had been taken by her, under the divine protection of Saint Claire. By her who spake was answer made:

"That is true."

By us was she asked if then she avowed as true the declarations of the most noble and illustrious lady abbess of Mount Carmel, and also the deposition of Jacquette, called Vieulx-Oing, scullery-maid. By her who spake was answer made that their words were true for the most part.

Thereupon, by us was she asked:

"Then you are a Christian?"

And by her who spake was answer made:

"Yes, my father."

At that moment was she by us required to make the sign of the Cross and to take holy water from a sprinkler held by Guillaume Tournebouche under

her hand; the which having done, and by us having been seen, it was admitted as a fact proved that Zulma the Mauritanian, called in our province Blanche Bruyn, nun of the convent of Mount Carmel, there known as Sister Claire, and suspected of being a false semblance of a woman, beneath which is hidden a demon, had in our presence made profession of faith, and thereby recognized the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunal.

Thereupon, by us were these words spoken:

"My child, you are vehemently suspected of having had recourse to the devil by the manner in which you went forth from the convent, the which was in all respects supernatural."

By her who spake was answer made, that she did at that time naturally betake herself to the fields through the street-door, after Vespers, dressed in the gown of Dom Jehan de Marsilis, visitor to the convent, who had given shelter to her who spake in a hovel to him belonging, situate on Rue du Cupidon, nigh one of the towers of the city. That there the said priest did to her who spake teach at great length and thoroughly the joys of love, whereof she who spake was then altogether ignorant; in the which joys she had taken much pleasure, finding them an excellent custom. Then the Sire d'Amboise, having espied her who spake at the window of that hovel, was smitten with a great love for her. Thereupon, she who spake, loving him with good heart, and more than the monk, took flight from the hovel wherein Dom Marsilis detained her

to the profit of his lust. And she went in much haste to Amboise, the said nobleman's château, where she had a thousand pleasures, the hunt, dancing, and beautiful royal garments. One day, the Sire de la Roche-Pozay, being bidden by the Sire d'Amboise to tipple and make merry with him, the said Sire d'Amboise had exhibited her who spake to him, unknown to her, when she came forth naked from the bath. Now, at this sight, the said Sieur de la Roche-Pozay, having fallen ill with love for her who spake, did on the morrow slay in single combat the Sire d'Amboise; and by great violence, despite her tears, did take her to the Holy Land, where she who spake had led the life of women dearly loved and held in great respect for their beauty's sake. Then, after many adventures, she who spake returned to this country, despite her dread of evil fortune, for that such was the will of her lord and master, Baron de Bueil, who was dying of grief in Asiatic climes and pined to once more see his ancestral manor. Now, he had promised her who spake to save her from all molestation. And she who spake had placed the more faith and credence in his word, for that she loved him dearly. But, after her arrival in this country, the Sieur de Bueil fell sick and died in much pain, without seeking any remedies despite the fervent prayers which she who spake addressed to him, for that he hated doctors, surgeons, and apothecaries; and that this was the whole truth.

Thereupon, by us was the accused asked if she

then avowed to be true the statements of the worthy Sire Harduin and of Tortebras the publican. By her who spake was answer made that she admitted them to be true for the most part, and, furthermore, that they were wicked, slanderous, and foolish in certain parts.

Thereupon was the accused required by us to state if she had had love and carnal intercourse with all the nobles, bourgeois, and others, whereof the people of the town bore testimony.

To the which by her who spake was answer made most shamelessly:

"Love, yes; but as to carnal intercourse, I know not."

By us was it said to her that they were all dead by her fault. By her who spake was answer made that their deaths could not be laid at her door, for that she did always deny herself to them, and the more she shunned them the more they came and assailed her who spake with infinite frenzy; and that when she who spake was taken by them, then did she go to them with all her strength by the grace of God, for that she felt bliss beyond compare in that thing. Then did she who spake aver that she confessed her secret feelings only for the reason that she was by us required to tell the whole truth, and that she who spake feared much the engines of the torturers.

Thereupon was she by us required to answer, under pain of torture, what was her thought when a noble youth died as a sequel of his commerce with

her. To which by her who spake was answer made that she was sore depressed and would fain destroy herself; prayed God, the Virgin, and the Saints to receive her in paradise, forasmuch as she who spake had never met with aught save kind and noble hearts wherein was no vice, and that, seeing them no more, she fell into great sadness, deemed herself a maleficent being or subject to an evil spell, which she communicated like the plague.

Thereupon, by us was she required to say where her prayers were said.

By her who spake was answer made that she prayed in her oratory, on her knees before God, who, according to the Gospel, sees and hears all and abides in every place.

Thereupon, by us was she asked why she frequented not the churches nor the services and festivals. To which by her who spake was answer made that they who came to love her chose feast-days for their bouts, and that she who spake did all things in obedience to their wishes.

By us was it pointed out to her with Christian kindliness that therein she was more submissive to men than to God's commands.

Thereupon, she who spake said that, for them who loved her well, she who spake would have thrown herself into burning flames, having never followed in her love any other course than that of nature, and for the world's weight in gold would not have lent her body or her love to a king whom she loved not with heart, feet, head, hair, brow, and

everything. In brief, and furthermore, she who spake had never plied the trade of wanton by selling a single morsel of love to a man whom she had not chosen for her own, and that he who had held her in his arms one hour or had once kissed her on the mouth possessed her for the rest of his days.

Thereupon, by us was she required to say whence came the jewels, gold dishes, silver, precious gems, royal furniture, rugs, *et cætera*, worth in the whole two hundred thousand doubloons according to expert testimony, found in her abode and placed in the keeping of the treasurer of the Chapter.

By her who spake was answer made that in us she placed all her hope, as in God himself, but that she dared not make answer to this, for that therein were involved the sweetest joys of love whereon she had always lived.

Then, being further interrogated, she who spake said that if we, her judge, knew in what fervent affection she held him whom she loved, with what obedience followed him on every pathway, good or evil, with what devotion submitted herself to him, with what joy listened to his desires and drank in the sacred words wherewith his mouth blessed her, and in what adoration held his whole person, then would we ourselves, an aged judge, believe, as did her well-beloved, that no treasure could pay for that great affection after which all men run. And she who spake said that she had never solicited gift or guerdon from any man by her loved, and that she was perfectly content to dwell in their hearts; and

that she dwelt therein with inexhaustible and ineffable pleasure, deeming herself richer in that heart than in all else, and had no other thought than to give them more joy and happiness than she received from them. But, notwithstanding the oft-repeated remonstrances of her who spake, her lovers did always strive to thank her gracefully. Anon would one come to her who spake with a clasp of pearls, saying: "This is to show my love that the satin of her skin seemed not wrongly to me whiter than pearls!" And would place it on her neck who spake, and kiss it ardently. She who spake was wroth at these follies, yet could she not refuse to keep a jewel which gave them pleasure to see where they placed it upon her. Each had some different fancy. Sometimes another loved to rend the priceless garments wherewith she who spake clothed herself to give him pleasure; another to cover her who spake with sapphires on her arms and legs and neck or in her hair; this one to stretch her on the carpet, in long shrouds of black silk or velvet, and to abide whole days in ecstasy with the perfections of her who spake, to whom the things desired by her lovers gave infinite delight, for that those things did fully content them. And she who spake said that, as we love nothing so much as our pleasure, and desire that all should be resplendent with beauty and with harmony, without as within the heart, that all desired to see the place wherein she dwelt who spake, adorned with the most beautiful things; and with that thought all her lovers pleased themselves

no less than her by strewing gold and silver flowers there. Now, inasmuch as those beautiful things were in nowise harmful, she who spake had no strength or authority to prevent a knight or even a rich bourgeois by whom she was loved from doing his will; and thus was she constrained to receive priceless perfumes and other gratifications whereon she who spake doted, and that such was the source of those gold plates, rugs, and jewels seized in her house by the officers of justice.

Here closes the first interrogatory of the said Sister Claire, suspected of being a demon, forasmuch as we the judge and Guillaume Tournebouche were overwearied by hearing the said sister's voice in our ears, and found our minds confused in every wise.

And the second interrogatory was by us the judge aforesaid appointed for the third day hence, for seeking proofs of the obsession and presence of the demon in the body of the said accused; who, in obedience to the order of the judge, was reconducted to her prison under escort of the said Master Guillaume Tournebouche.

† *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

On the following thirteenth day of the said month of February, before us, Hiérome Cornille, *et cætera*, was produced Sister Claire, hereinbefore named, to be by us interrogated touching the acts and deeds to her imputed, and to be thereof convicted.

By us the judge was the accused informed that, in view of the divers answers by her made to the preceding interrogatories, it appeared that it could never be in the power of a simple woman—even though she were authorized, if such license could be granted, to lead the life of a woman mad in body giving pleasure to all men—to cause so many deaths and achieve such perfect spells, without the aid of a private demon lodged in her body, and to whom her soul was sold by special compact. Hence was it plainly shown that beneath her mask there lived and moved a demon, author of these ills, and that she was now summoned to declare at what age she had received that demon in her body; to avow the terms compounded between her and him, and to tell the truth touching their common malefices.

By her who spake was answer made that she was content to reply to us, her judge, as to God, who is the Judge of all. And, thereupon, she who spake averred that she had never seen the demon, nor spoken to him, nor in anywise desired to see him; had not plied the trade of courtesan, for that she who spake had never tasted the joys of every sort which love invents, save when moved thereto by the pleasure which the Sovereign Creator hath implanted in that thing, and had been always incited thereto rather by the wish to be kind and good to the dear lord whom she loved, than by a passion constantly aflame. But that, even had such been her impulse, she who spake besought us to remember that she was a poor African girl to whom God

had given very ardent blood, and had endowed her mind with such ready understanding of amorous delights, that, when a man but looked at her, she felt a great commotion in her heart. And if, in the desire of commerce with her, an amorous swain should touch her who spake on any part of her body, placing his hand thereon, then was she, despite everything, in his power, for that her heart incontinently failed her. With that touch, the apprehension and memory of all the sweet joys of love awoke in the heart of her being, inciting there an intense heat, which rose higher and higher, boiled in her veins, and made her all love and joy from head to foot. And on the day when Dom Marsilis had first opened the mind of her who spake to comprehension of these things, she had had no other thought, and recognized that love was a thing so perfectly accordant with her special nature, that it had since been made clear to her who spake that she would have withered away in the said convent, for lack of men and natural sprinkling. In testimony whereof she who spake averred in all certainty that, since her flight from the said convent, she had not passed a single day or morsel of time in melancholy or sadness, but was always light of heart, and therein followed the sacred will of God in her regard, wherefrom she deemed herself to have been turned aside throughout the time wasted by her in that convent.

Whereat we, Hiérome Cornille, did object to the said demon that in that reply there was manifest

blasphemy against God, forasmuch as we were all made for His greater glory and brought into this world to honor and to serve Him, to have before our eyes His blessed commandments, and to live holily to the end that we may merit eternal happiness, and not to be forever couched to do that which the very beasts do but a single time.

Thereupon, the said sister made answer that she who spake had given God great honor; that, in all lands, she had been heedful of the poor and suffering, giving them much money and garments, and weeping at the sight and knowledge of their sorrows; and that, at the day of the Last Judgment, she who spake might hope to have about her a goodly company of holy works pleasing in God's sight, which would crave mercy for her. And that, but for her humility, fear of being reproved, and of displeasing the gentlemen of the Chapter, she would joyfully have expended her riches to complete the Cathedral of Saint-Maurice, and to found masses there for the salvation of her soul; and that, with that thought, she would have taken twofold pleasure in her nights, for that each of her amours would have laid a stone in the building of that basilica. Nay, more, for that end, and for the eternal happiness of her who spake, would all they who loved her have given of their worldly goods with great goodwill.

Thereupon, by us was it said to the demon that she could in nowise justify her barrenness, for that, despite so much carnal intercourse, no child had been born of her, the which did fully prove the presence

of a demon in her body. Nay, more, none but Astaroth or an Apostle could speak in every language, whereas she spake after the manner of all countries, the which bore witness to the devil's presence in her.

To this by her who spake was answer made, touching the diversities of language, that of Greek she knew no other words than *Kyrie Eleison!* whereof she made great use: of Latin naught save *Amen!* and said it to God, hoping to obtain liberty thereby. And that, touching the other matter, she who spake was sore grieved to be barren of children; and, if good housewives bore them, it was her belief that it was for the reason that they take little pleasure in the thing, and she who spake, something too much. But that such was doubtless the will of God, who thought that by too great happiness the world would be in danger of perishing.

Hearing this and many other reasons which sufficiently established the presence of a devil in the sister's body, forasmuch as it is the special privilege of Lucifer always to have at hand heretical arguments having plausibility, we gave order that the said accused should be, in our presence, put to the torture and much afflicted, to the end that the said demon be reduced by suffering and forced to yield to the authority of the Church. Whereupon, we summoned to our aid François de Hangest, physician and surgeon to the Chapter, enjoining him, by ordinance hereinunder transcribed, to examine the peculiarities of the female structure—*virtutes*

vulvæ—of the aforesaid woman, in order to enlighten our holy religion touching the means resorted to by this demon to catch up souls in this way, and to discover if any artifice be apparent therein.

Thereupon did the said Moorish woman weep much and lament in advance, and, her fetters notwithstanding, did kneel, imploring with outcries and much clamor revocation of the said order, averring her limbs to be in such a state of weakness and her bones so tender that she would be shattered like glass. And, lastly, offered to purchase exemption therefrom by the gift of her worldly goods to the Chapter, and to leave the province incontinently.

Whereupon she was by us required to declare freely that she was and had always been a demon of the race of succubæ, which are female devils, having the mission of corrupting Christians by the blandishments and wicked delights of love. Whereunto, by her who spake was answer made that such declaration would be an abominable untruth, seeing that she had always felt herself to be a natural woman.

Thereupon, her irons having been removed by the torturer, the said accused did lay aside her gown, and wickedly and of her malice aforethought did dazzle and bewilder us and confuse our understanding by the sight of her body, which doth, in very truth, exert a superhuman influence over man.

Master Guillaume Tournebouche did, by force of nature, lay down his pen at this point, and withdraw, affirming that he could not, without incredible

temptations which confused his brain, be witness to that torture, for that he felt the devil taking possession of his person with violence.

Here ended the second interrogatory, and whereas it was stated by the apparitor of the Chapter that the said Master François de Hangest was in the country, the torture and interrogatories were appointed for the morrow, at midday, after mass.

This was written by me, Hiérome, in the absence of Master Guillaume Tournebouche, in faith whereof have I set my hand.

HIEROME CORNILLE,
Grand Penitentiary.

PETITION

This day, the fourteenth day of the month of February, before me, Hiérome Cornille, appeared the said Masters Jehan Ribou, Antoyne Jahan, Martin Maupertuis, Hiérome Maschefer, Jacques de Ville d'Omer, and the Sire d'Ydré, in the stead and place of the mayor of the city of Tours, then absent. All complainants named in the petition in hearing at the hôtel-de-ville, to whom we have, at the petition of Blanche Bruyn, now acknowledging herself to be a nun of the convent of Mount Carmel under the name of Sister Claire, made known the appeal made to the judgment of God by the said sister accused of demoniacal possession, together with her offer to undergo the trial by fire and water, in presence of the Chapter and of the city of Tours, to the end that she may prove her real womanhood and her innocence.

To this petition the said accusers do, on their part, assent; who, provided that the city doth likewise, do bind themselves to prepare the place and a suitable stake to be approved by the sponsors of the accused.

And by us, the judge, the first day of the new year, which will be Easter next, hath been appointed as the time for the trial, and we have assigned the hour of high noon, after mass, both parties having declared this delay to be amply sufficient.

Wherefore let this present decree be cried aloud by both parties, in all the cities, villages, and châteaux of Touraine and of all France, at their pleasure and at their cost and diligence.

HIEROME CORNILLE.

III

WHAT WAS DONE BY THE SUCCUBA TO SUCK THE SOUL OF THE OLD JUDGE, AND WHAT CAME OF THAT DIABOLICAL DELECTATION.

This is the confession in extremis *made on the first day of March in the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-one after the coming of our Blessed Lord, by Hiérome Cornille, priest, canon of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Saint-Maurice, Grand Penitentiary, acknowledging himself unworthy of all. Who, finding himself at his last hour, and repenting of his sins,*

evil-doing, shortcomings, misdeeds, and wickedness, hath desired that his confession be made public, in order to serve the proclamation of the truth, the glory of God, the justice of the tribunal, and to be an alleviation of his punishment in the other world. The said Hiérome Cornille being on his death-bed, these were summoned to hear his declarations, to wit: Jéhan de la Haye,—de Haga,—vicar of the church of Saint-Maurice, Pierre Guyard, treasurer of the Chapter, commissioned by our lord Jehan de Monsoreau, archbishop, to write down his words, and Dom Louis Pot, monk of the majus monasterium,—*Marmoustiers,—chosen by him for spiritual father and confessor; all three assisted by the great and illustrious Doctor Guillaume de Censoris, Roman archdeacon, now in our diocese as envoy,—* legatus,—*from our Holy Father the Pope. Finally, in presence of a great number of Christians assembled to be witnesses of the demise of the said Hiérome Cornille, upon his published desire to make public profession of repentance, inasmuch as he goeth hence in Lent, and his words may open the eyes of Christians in danger of finding lodgings in hell.*

And in the presence of him, Hiérome, who, because of his exceeding weakness, could not speak, did Dom Louis Pot read the following confession, to the great emotion of the aforementioned witnesses:

"Brethren, until the seventy-ninth year of my life, which is the present year, saving and excepting the trivial sins whereof a Christian, howsoever saintlike he be, makes himself culpable in God's sight, but the which we are permitted to redeem

by doing penance, methinks that I have lived a Christian life and merited the praise and renown which have fallen to my lot in this diocese, wherein I was raised to the most exalted office of Grand Penitentiary, whereof I am unworthy. But now, overcome by apprehension of the infinite glory of God, terrified by the thought of the torments which await the wicked man and the prevaricator in hell, I have hoped to lessen the enormity of my sins by the greatest penance which it lies in my power to accomplish in my last hour which is drawing nigh. Thereupon have I besought, at the hands of the Church, whereof I have perverted, betrayed, and sold the privileges and the renown for justice, the blessed favor of accusing myself publicly after the manner of the ancient Christians. I could have wished, the better to testify to my great repentance, that there still abode within me enough of life to be upbraided by all my brethren at the portal of the cathedral, to remain there on my knees an entire day, holding a taper, having a cord about my neck, and barefooted, seeing that I have followed far the devious ways of hell to the prejudice of the sacred interests of God. But, in this great shipwreck of my frail virtue, the which should be to you a warning to shun vice and the wiles of the devil and to take refuge in the Church, whence all help cometh, so bedevilled was I by Lucifer that our Lord Jesus Christ will, through the intercession of you all, whose aid and prayers I implore, take pity on me, poor bewitched Christian that I am, whose eyes are

melting in tears. Would that I had another life to spend in works of repentance! Now, therefore, hear ye and tremble in great fear! Chosen by the assembled Chapter to carry on, conduct, and make report of the inquest instituted in the matter of the demon which hath appeared in female guise in the person of a recreant nun, a shameless creature who doth deny God, being named Zulma in the heathen country whence she came; which devil is known in this diocese under the name of Claire of the convent of Mount Carmel, and hath much afflicted the town by putting herself under an infinite number of men, to win over their souls to Mammon, Astaroth, and Satan, princes of hell, by causing them to leave this world in a state of mortal sin, and bringing death to them through that part wherein life hath its source, I myself, a judge, did fall, at the end of my days, into that snare, and did lose my wits performing treacherously the functions committed in all confidence by the Chapter to my passionless old age. Hear how subtle is the demon, and strengthen yourselves against her artifices. Upon hearing the first reply made by the said succuba, I saw with terror that the fetters placed on her feet and hands left no traces; and so was bewildered by her latent strength and seeming weakness. Then was my mind suddenly disturbed at sight of the natural perfections wherewith the devil hath clothed himself. I listened to the music of her voice, which warmed me from head to feet, and made me desire to be young that I might

give myself to that demon, for methought that, for an hour passed in her company, my eternal salvation would be but a paltry price to pay for the joys of love tasted in those slender arms. Thereupon, I laid aside the firmness wherewith judges should be always armed. That demon, by me questioned, did so bandy words with me, that in her second interrogatory I held the firm persuasion that I should commit a crime in mulcting and torturing a poor little creature who wept like an innocent babe. Thereafter, warned by a voice from on high to do my duty, and that those golden words, that music of divine semblance, were diabolic mummeries; that that body, so sweet and so instinct with life, would be transformed into a horrible hairy beast with sharp claws; and her beauteous eyes into brands of hell, her rump into a scaly tail, and her sweet, rosy mouth and gracefully curved lips into a crocodile's maw, I returned, designing to cause the said succuba to be put to the torture until she should confess her mission, as hath heretofore been practised in such cases in all Christian lands. But when that demon did show herself unto me all naked, to be put to the torture, then was I of a sudden made subject to her power by magic spells. I felt my old bones crack; my brain received a flood of warm life; my heart overflowed with bubbling, youthful blood; I was made light within myself; and, by the power of the philter cast in my eyes, all the snows of my brow were melted. I lost all knowledge of my Christian life, and deemed myself a schoolboy

wandering about the country, a truant from school and stealing apples. I had not strength to make a single sign of the Cross, nor did I think of the Church, of God the Father, or of the gentle Saviour of mankind. A victim of that ruse, I wandered through the streets, recalling the delights of that voice, the abominably sweet body of that demon, saying innumerable evil things to me. Then, smitten and drawn onward by a blow of the devil's fork, which was already planted in my brain like a bill-hook in an oak, I was haled by that sharp iron toward the gaol, despite my guardian angel, who from time to time did pull me by the arm and seek to safeguard me against temptation; but, notwithstanding his blessed counsels and assistance, I was dragged onward by millions of claws buried in my heart, and found myself ere long in that gaol. When the door was opened to me, no longer saw I aught that bore the semblance of a prison, for that the succuba had, by the aid of evil genii or fairies, constructed there a bower of silks and purple, full of perfumes and flowers, wherein she disported herself, magnificently clad, without fetters on her neck or chains on her feet. Then did I allow myself to be stripped of my ecclesiastical garb and was placed in a perfumed bath. Thereupon, the demon covered me with a Saracen robe, served me a banquet of rare sweetmeats, contained in priceless vessels, gold cups, Asian wines, marvellous songs and music, and many a word of praise which made my heart glad through my ears. At my side was the said succuba

always, and her sweet detestable endearments distilled new ardor through my limbs. My guardian angel left me. Then did I live in the awful light of the Moorish woman's eyes, long for the warm embrace of her slender body, and to feel always her red lips which I deemed human, nor had I any fear of the bite of her teeth, which drew me to the lowest depths of hell. I took the keenest delight in feeling the incomparable softness of her hands, not thinking that they were filthy claws. In fine, I frisked about like a spouse longing to go to his bride, not thinking that that bride was everlasting death. No thought had I for the things of this world, nor for the interests of God, dreaming of naught save love, of that woman's round breasts which made me burn, and of her gate of hell whereinto I was all aflame to cast myself. Alas! my brethren, during three days and nights was I constrained to labor thus, unable to exhaust the stream that flowed from my loins, wherein did plunge, like unto two pikes, the hands of that succuba, which did to my poor old age and to my dry bones communicate I know not what love-sweat. At first, to draw me to her, that demon caused to flow within me a softness as of milk; then came poignant ecstasies which pricked like a hundred needles my bones, marrow, brain, and nerves. And at that game took fire the secret regions of my head, my blood, my nerves, my flesh, my bones; then burned I with the true fire of hell, which caused a rending of joints, and an incredible, intolerable, heart-sickening pleasure which relaxed the

springs of my life. The hair of the demon, wherein my poor body was enveloped, poured upon me a dew of flame, and each tress was to my touch like a red-hot gridiron bar. In that deadly enjoyment I saw the glowing features of the said succuba, who laughed and said to me a thousand goading words: as that I was her true knight, her lord, her lance, her light, her joy, her lightning, her life, her treasure, her best rider; and that it was her will to unite our bodies yet more closely, wishing to be in my skin or to have me in hers. Which hearing, under the spur of that tongue which sucked my very soul, I plunged and buried myself still deeper in hell, and found no bottom there. And when there remained not a drop of blood in my veins, when my heart no more beat in my body, when I was undone in every wise, then said the demon, still fresh, fair, rosy, glowing, and laughing:

"'Poor fool, to think me a demon! Hey! an I should call upon thee to sell thy soul to me for a kiss, wouldst thou not do it willingly?'

"'Even so,' said I.

"'And if, in order to do this work forever, need were to nourish thyself on the blood of new-born babes, to the end that thou mightst always have new store of life to expend in my bed, say, wouldst thou not drink it gladly?'

"'Even so,' said I.

"'And, to be always in the saddle thus, brisk as a man in his prime, instinct with life, drinking pleasure, plunging to the deepest depths of joy like a

swimmer in the Loire, wouldst thou not deny God, wouldst thou not spit in the face of Jesus?'

"'Even so,' said I.

"'If twenty years more of monastic life are destined to be thine, wouldst thou not barter them for two years of this love which burns thee, and to be at this sweet task?'

"'Even so,' said I.

"Thereupon, I felt a hundred sharp claws, which rent my diaphragm as if a thousand birds of prey had buried their beaks therein, screaming. Then was I of a sudden taken from the earth upon the said succuba, who unfolded her wings and said to me:

"'Ride, ride, my rider! Hold fast to thy mare's rump, to her mane, to her neck, and ride, ride, my rider! All men ride!'

"Thus saw I, as in a mist, the cities of the earth, wherein, by virtue of a special power, I saw each man accoupled with a female demon, and puffing lustily, engendering in great concupiscence, all crying out a thousand words of love, ejaculations of all sorts, and all united, bolted together, and moving vigorously. Thereupon, my mare, with the head of a Moorish woman, still flying and galloping through the clouds, showed me the earth accoupled with the sun, in a conjunction whence issued a sheaf of stars; and each female world among them taking pleasure with a male world. But, instead of words as mortal creatures speak them, the worlds, as they toiled, sweated our tempests, emitted lightning-flashes, and shouted peals of thunder. Then,

ascending still, I saw above the worlds the female nature of all existing things in the embrace of the prince of motion.

"Now did the succuba in mockery place me in the very heart of that appalling and perpetual struggle where I was lost, even as a grain of sand in the sea. And still my white mare said to me: 'Ride, ride, my gallant rider, ride! Every man rides!' Now, considering how small a matter a poor priest was in that torrent of the seed of worlds, where metals and stones, the air, the waters, lightning-flashes, fishes, plants, animals, men, spirits, worlds, and planets were ever in commerce together, and embracing one another with frenzy, I forswore the Catholic faith. Then did the succuba, pointing to that great blotch of stars which we see in the sky, tell me that that milky way was a drop of celestial seed, escaped from a great flood from worlds in conjunction. Thereupon did I bestride the succuba more fiercely, by the light of a thousand millions of stars, and I would fain, while thus bestriding her, have felt the nature of those thousand millions of creations. But by this great effort of love I fell, impotent in every limb, in my ears a great outburst of infernal laughter. Then did I find myself in my own bed, surrounded by my servants, who had had the courage to contend with the demon by casting a vessel full of holy water into the bed whereon I lay, and offering fervent prayers to God. Then had I to sustain, despite this succor, a shocking combat with the said succuba, whose claws tore my heart and

caused me endless agony. And when, revivified by the voices of my servants, kindred, and friends, I strove to make the sign of the Cross, the succuba, then present in my bed, at the pillow, at the foot, and everywhere, put forth her energies to excite my nerves, laughed, grimaced, placed innumerable obscene images before my eyes, and gave me a thousand evil desires. This notwithstanding, monseigneur the archbishop, having taken pity on me, caused the relics of Saint Gatien to be brought, and when the reliquary touched my pillow, then was the succuba constrained to fly, leaving an odor of sulphur and of hell, which caused a choking in the throats of all my servants, friends, and others throughout one whole day. Thereafter, my soul being enlightened by the celestial light of God, I knew that, by reason of my sins and my combat with the evil spirit, I was in great peril of death. Wherefore I implored the special grace of living still a little while, to the end that I might give glory to God and His Church, by setting forth the boundless merits of Jesus on the Cross, who died for the salvation of Christians. By that prayer I obtained the favor of recovering strength to accuse myself of my sins, to implore of all the members of the church of Saint-Maurice their prayers and succor to rescue me from Purgatory, whither I go to redeem my sins by endless suffering. Lastly do I declare that my judgment in said cause, which accords to the said demon an appeal to the justice of God and to the trial by fire and water, is a subterfuge due to

the evil design suggested by the said demon, who would thereby have been enabled to escape the justice of the tribunal of the archbishop and the Chapter, forasmuch as she did in secret avow to me that she had license to summon a demon accustomed to that trial to appear in her place.

"To conclude, I do hereby give and bequeath to the Chapter of the church of Saint-Maurice my worldly goods of every sort, to found a chapel in said church, to build it and decorate it, and place it under the invocation of Saint Hiérome and Saint Gatien, whereof one is my patron saint and the other the savior of my soul."

The foregoing, having been heard by all those present, hath been laid before the ecclesiastical tribunal by Jehan de la Haye—Johannes de Haga.

We, Jehan de la Haye,—Johannes de Haga,—chosen Grand Penitentiary of Saint-Maurice by the general assembly of the Chapter, according to the usage and custom of said church, and commissioned to proceed anew to the prosecution of the demon succuba, now in the prison of the Chapter, have ordered a new inquiry, wherein will be heard all those of this diocese having knowledge of the facts relative hereto. We declare of no effect the prior proceedings, interrogatories, decrees, and annul them in the name of the members of the church assembled in general and sovereign Chapter, and aver that there is no ground for the appeal to God perfidiously made by the demon, considering the signal treachery of the devil in that regard. And the said

judgment will be cried with sound of trumpet in all places of the diocese wherein were published the false edicts of the month last past, all notoriously due to the instigations of the demon, according to the confessions of the late Hiérome Cornille.

Let all Christians be in aid of our holy Church and her commandments.

JEHAN DE LA HAYE.

IV

HOW THE MOORISH WOMAN OF RUE CHAULDE CAPERED SO BRISKLY THAT WITH GREAT PAINS WAS SHE BURNED AND ROASTED ALIVE TO THE PREJUDICE OF HELL

This was written in the month of May of the year 1360, in the form of a testament.

My very dear and well-beloved son, when it shall be permitted thee to read these presents, I, thy father, shall be laid away in the tomb, imploring thy prayers and beseeching thee so to conduct thyself in life as will be enjoined upon thee by this writing, bequeathed to thee for the wise government of thy family, for thy happiness and welfare; for I wrote this at a time when I had my senses and my understanding, stricken but yesterday by the

sovereign injustice of mankind. In the bloom of my manhood I had the lofty ambition to be brought up in the Church and to attain the highest dignities therein, for the reason that no life seemed fairer to me. Now, with that grave project, I learned to read and write; then, with much pains, became fitted to take a place among the clergy. But, forasmuch as I had no protectors, no wise counsel to guide my steps, I had the craft to offer myself to be clerk, notary, and rubricist of the Saint-Martin Chapter, wherein were the most exalted and richest men in Christendom, so that the King of France is a simple canon there. Therefore was I like to find there, better than elsewhere, occasion to render service to some noble, and, thereby, to find masters, to be by them protected, and by their means to enter the Church and come at last to be mitred like another and raised to an archiepiscopal see, I know not where. But this first project was over-presumptuous, and something too ambitious, the which God showed me plainly by the sequel. Messire Jehan de Ville d'Omer, who thereafter became cardinal, was installed in that post, and I rejected and defeated. Then, in that evil hour, was my sorrow lightened by the advice of good old Hiérome Cornille, Penitentiary of the Cathedral, of whom I have often spoken to you. By his gentle ways, that dear man constrained me to come and hold the pen for the Chapter of Saint-Maurice and the archbishopric of Tours; the which I did with honor, seeing that I was reputed a goodly writer.

In the year when I was about to enter the priesthood arose the famous prosecution of the devil on Rue Chaulde, whereof the aged still speak and tell the young the story, which, in those days, was told in all the homes of France. Now, in the belief that it would be to the advantage of my ambition, and that, for that assistance, the Chapter would raise me to some dignity, my kind master caused me to be assigned to write down all that there should be cause to write down in that weighty business. At the beginning, Monseigneur Hiérome Cornille, a man drawing nigh to eighty years, and of great learning, justice, and good understanding, suspected some malice in the affair. Although he did not love damsels enamored of their bodies, nor had ever had commerce with a woman in his life, which was holy and venerable, which holiness was the cause of his selection as judge, that notwithstanding, no sooner were the depositions finished and the poor child heard, than it became clear that, albeit that joyous wench had broken the ban of her convent, she was innocent of all witchcraft, and that her great wealth was coveted by her foes and by others whom from prudence I choose not to name. At that time, everyone believed her to be so abundantly supplied with gold and silver that some said that she could purchase the county of Touraine, if such were her good pleasure. Hence falsehoods innumerable and slanderous reports touching that girl, whom virtuous women envied, became current everywhere and became Gospel truths. At that juncture, did

Monseigneur Hiérome Cornille, fully persuaded that there was no other demon in that girl than the demon of love, obtain her consent to remain in the convent during the rest of her days. Then, being assured by certain gallant knights, mighty in war and rich in estates, that they would dare all to save her, he counselled her secretly to demand from her accusers the judgment of God, not without giving her riches to the Chapter, to the end that evil tongues might be put to silence. By these means was the daintiest flower to be preserved that ever Heaven let fall upon our earth; the which flower of womankind had no other failing than an excessive tenderness and compassion for the disease of love sown by her eyes in the hearts of all her suitors. But the true devil, in the guise of a monk, took a hand in this affair; in this wise: A great enemy of the virtue, wisdom, and holiness of Monseigneur Hiérome Cornille, by name Jehan de la Haye, having learned that the poor girl was treated like a queen in her gaol, did wickedly accuse the Grand Penitentiary of connivance with her, and of being her servant, for that, so said this wicked priest, she made him young, amorous, and happy; whereof the poor old man died in a single day, knowing thereby that Jehan de la Haye had sworn his death and coveted his dignities. Our lord archbishop did in truth visit the prison and found the Moorish woman in a pleasant place, well lodged, without fetters; for that, having hid a diamond in a place where no one would have thought that it

would remain, she had purchased the gaoler's clemency. At that time, some said that this gaoler was enamored of her, and that through love, or better, through great fear of the young barons who were lovers of that woman, he planned her flight.

Goodman Cornille being at death's door, and, by virtue of the noise made by Jehan de la Haye, the Chapter deeming it necessary to annul the procedure conducted by the Penitentiary, and likewise his decrees, the said Jehan de la Haye, then simple vicar of the cathedral, set forth that, for that end, a public confession on his death-bed would suffice. Thereupon was the moribund hounded and tormented by the gentlemen of the Chapter, by them of Saint-Martin and Marmoustiers, by the archbishop, and likewise by the legate of the Pope, to the end that he should retract to the advantage of the Church, which to do the goodman would in nowise consent. But, after numberless ills, was his public confession prepared, whereat the most considerable persons of the town attended; the which spread such horror and consternation abroad as I can in nowise describe. The churches of the diocese held public prayers for this calamitous mishap, and one and all were in great fear lest they should see the devil coming down their chimneys. But the truth is that my dear master Hiérome was sick with fever and saw kine in his room when this retractation was forced from him. When the attack was past, the poor saint wept bitterly, on learning of this base trickery from me. And died in

my arms, attended by his physician, sore afflicted by this mummery, saying to us that he was going hence to God's feet to pray to Him that He would not allow so deplorable a crime to be accomplished. This poor Moorish woman had moved him much by her tears and her repentance, forasmuch as, before bidding her appeal to the judgment of God, he had confessed her privately, and thereby had set free the divine soul that abode in that body, and whereof he spake to us as of a diamond worthy to adorn God's sanctified crown, when she should have departed from life after penance done.

Thereafter, my dear son, knowing from those things which were said in the city, and from the frank answers of that poor creature, all the knavery of the affair, I resolved, by the advice of Master François de Hangest, physician to the Chapter, to feign sickness and to leave the service of the church of Saint-Maurice and the archbishopric, not wishing to stain my hand with the innocent blood which still crieth aloud and will cry aloud until the day of God's Last Judgment. Then was the gaoler driven forth, and in his place was put the torturer's second son, who cast the Moorish woman into a dungeon, and inhumanly did rivet on her hands and feet irons of fifty pounds weight, besides a wooden girdle. The gaol was guarded by crossbowmen of the town and the archbishop's men-at-arms. The wench was put to the question, tortured, had her bones crushed; overcome by pain, she confessed what things soever Jehan de la Haye desired, and was incontinently

sentenced to be burned in the village of Saint-Etienne, after standing at the church portal clad in a shift of sulphur; her worldly goods were confiscated to the Chapter, *et cætera*. This sentence was the cause of great uprisings and appeals to arms throughout the city, for three young chevaliers of Touraine swore to die in the poor wench's service and to deliver her by fair means or foul. To that end they came into the city accompanied by thousands of the poor and needy, men of toil, old troopers, men of war, artisans, and others whom the said accused had succored, saved from suffering, from hunger, from all want; and searched the hovels of the town where they abode to whom she had been kind. And when they were all aroused and convoked at the foot of Mont-Louis under the protection of the men-at-arms of the said nobles, they were accompanied by all the men of evil life from twenty leagues around, and laid siege one morning to the prison of the archbishopric, demanding that the Moorish woman be delivered to them, as if they would put her to death, but in truth and fact to set her free and place her on a swift steed, so that she might make her escape, since she rode like an esquire.

In that frightful tempest of human beings, we saw between the buildings of the archbishopric and the bridges more than ten thousand swarming men, besides all them who had perched themselves on housetops and climbed to all the floors to see the uprising. Then could one hear with ease beyond

Saint-Symphorien, on the other bank of the Loire, the fear-inspiring outcries of the Christians who went thither innocently and of them who encompassed the gaol with intent to aid the poor girl to escape. So great was the suffocation and pressure of bodies in that populace, thirsty for the poor woman's blood, at whose knees they would all have fallen, had they but had the happiness to see her, that seven children, eleven women, and eight men were crushed, trampled on, so that they could not be recognized, for they were as heaps of slime. In truth, so wide open was the huge maw of that popular Leviathan, horrible monster, that the uproar was heard at Montilz-les-Tours. All cried: "Death to the succuba!—Deliver the demon to us!—Ha! I would have a quarter of her!—I would have her hair!—And I her foot!—Thou shalt have the mane! To me the head!—And I the thing!—Is it red?—Shall we see it?—Will it be burned?—Death, death!" —Everyone said his say. But the cry: "Largesse to God! Death to the succuba!" was uttered at the same moment by the crowd so loud and savagely that men's hearts and ears bled; and the other yells were hardly heard within the building.

To still this storm which threatened to destroy everything, the archbishop conceived the plan of going forth in great pomp from the church, bearing aloft the Host, the which delivered the Chapter from destruction, forasmuch as the wicked men and nobles had sworn to destroy and burn the cloister and kill the canons. But by this stratagem were

one and all constrained to melt away, and, for lack of food, returned to their homes. Thereupon, the monks of Touraine, the nobles and the bourgeois, in great dread of pillage on the morrow, assembled by night and bowed to the opinion of the Chapter. By their endeavors, the men-at-arms, archers, knights, and bourgeois, in endless numbers, kept watch and slew a party of shepherds, carters, and banditti, who, being advised of the hurly-burly at Tours, came thither to swell the ranks of the malcontents. Messire Harduin de Maillé, an aged nobleman, reasoned with the young noblemen who were the Moorish woman's champions and spake sagely to them, asking if they would put Touraine to fire and the sword for a woman's rump; if, even though they should be victorious, they could control the rogues convoked by them; that these said rogues, after destroying the châteaux of their foes, would fall upon those of their leaders; but that, the rebellion thus begun having had no success at the beginning, for that the square was now clear, could they hope to prevail over the church of Tours, which would invoke the aid of the king? And many other arguments. To the which the young nobles made answer that it was easy for the Chapter to allow the woman to escape at night, and that thereby would the cause of the uprising be removed. To this sage and humane request made answer Monseigneur de Censoris, legate of the Pope, that there was need that the victory should remain with the religion and the Church. Thereupon, the poor

wench paid for all, forasmuch as it was agreed that no proceedings should be instituted touching this uprising.

Thus the Chapter had license to proceed to the torture of the accused, to the which ecclesiastical function and ceremony people flocked from twelve leagues around. So that, on the day when, after undergoing the divine penalties, the succuba was to be delivered to secular justice, to be publicly burned at a stake, not for a pound of gold could a villein, nay, nor an abbé, have found lodging in the city of Tours. The night before, many camped in tents without the city walls or lay on the ground. Food was lacking, and many who came thither with full bellies returned with bellies empty, having seen naught save the fire blazing from afar. Then did the cutpurses do many good strokes of business on the high-roads.

The poor courtesan was dead to all intent. Her hair had turned white. In truth, she was no more than a skeleton barely covered with flesh, and her fetters weighed more than herself. If she had had aught of pleasure in her life, dearly did she pay for it at that moment. They who saw her pass said that she wept and cried to wake the pity of them who were most bitter against her. So that in the church they were fain to put a gag between her teeth, which she bit as a lizard bites a stick. Then did the executioner bind her to a stake to keep her erect, seeing that at times she slipped to the ground and fell for lack of strength. Then did she of a

sudden recover her strength of wrist; for, so 'tis said, this notwithstanding, she was able to shake off her cords and escape into the church, where, in remembrance of her former trade, she climbed with great agility to the upper galleries, flitting like a bird along the colonnades and delicately-carved friezes. She was about to escape by the roof when a cross-bowman took aim at her and shot his arrow into her ankle. Despite her half-severed foot, the poor girl ran swiftly on through the church, heedless of her hurt, running on the shattered bone, expending her blood, so great was her fear of the flames of the stake. At last was she taken and bound, cast upon a hurdle, and haled to the stake, nor was she afterward heard to utter a cry. The tale of her race through the church aided the common people to believe that she was in very truth the devil, and some averred that she had flown through the air. When the executioner of Tours cast her into the flames, she made two or three ghastly leaps, then fell into the midst of the blazing pyre, which burned day and night.

On the morrow at evening, I went to see if aught remained of that sweet, loving maid; but naught found I save a paltry fragment of the stomachal bone, wherein, despite the fierce heat, there still remained some moisture, and which some said still quivered like a woman in the act of diversion.

I cannot, my dear son, describe the great and incomparable melancholy which, during ten long years, weighed heavily upon me. Always had I in

mind that angel maltreated by evil men, and always saw her eyes brimful of love; in brief, the superhuman gifts of that innocent child shone night and day before my vision, and I prayed for her in the church wherein she was martyrized. Nor had I strength or courage to look without a shudder on the Grand Penitentiary Jehan de la Haye, who died devoured by lice. Leprosy wreaked vengeance on the bailiff. The house and wife of Jehan were consumed by fire, and all they who had a hand in that burning at the stake were scorched thereby.

This, my well-beloved son, was the source of many a thought which I have here set down in writing to be the rule of conduct in our family forever.

I left the service of the Church, and took your mother to wife, from whom I received infinite happiness, and with whom I shared my life, my goods, my soul, my all. And she was in accord with me in these precepts following. To wit: first, to live happily, one must needs live far from churchmen, honor them much without giving them license to enter your house, nor any others who, by privilege, just or unjust, are deemed to be above us. Secondly, to assume a modest station and hold it, nor seek to seem in anywise a rich man. Take care to arouse no man's envy, nor injure any person in any manner, for one must needs be strong as an oak which kills the plants at its foot, to crush envious heads. And even so you would succumb, since human oaks are especially rare, nor should any Tournebouche

flatter himself that he is one, so long as he shall be a Tournebouche. Thirdly, never expend above the fourth part of your revenues, publish not your wealth, cloak your profits, accept no office; go to church even as other men, and always keep your thoughts to yourself, since in that case they are yours, and not the property of other men who would clothe themselves therein, make cloaks thereof, and turn them to their own ends in guise of calumny. Fourthly, abide always by the trade of the Tournebouches, who are drapers now and forever. Marry your daughters to honest drapers, send your boys to be drapers in other cities of France, fortified with these sage precepts, and rear them in honor of the draper's trade, nor leave any ambitious thought in their minds. *A draper like all Tournebouches* should be their glory, their arms, their name, their motto, their life. And being always drapers, thus will they be always Tournebouches, and unknown, and will live on like little plodding insects, who, once safely quartered in a beam, make their holes and travel in all security to the end of their ball of thread. Fifthly, speak no other language than the language of drapery; discuss not religion or government. And whether the government of the State, the province, the religion, and God veer about or take a whim to turn to right or left, always, like a good Tournebouche, stick to your cloth. Thus, being observed by no one in the town, will the Tournebouches live in peace with their little Tournebouchons, duly paying the tithes and imposts and all that they may be

by force required to pay to God or the king, to town or parish church, with which you must never argue. Therefore you must needs reserve the patrimonial treasure to have peace, to purchase peace, owe naught, have grain in the house, and make merry with closed doors and windows.

By this means none will acquire a hold upon the Tournebouches, neither the State, nor the Church, nor the nobles, to whom, if need be, if you be constrained thereto, you will lend a few crowns, nor hope ever to see them more,—I mean the crowns. Thus will all men, at all seasons, love the Tournebouches. And they will mock at the Tournebouches, as people of no consequence; paltry Tournebouches; Tournebouches of no understanding. Let the fools talk. The Tournebouches will neither be burned, nor hanged, to the profit of the Church, the king, or others; and the wise Tournebouches will secretly put money in their fobs and joy in their homes, unknown to all.

Therefore, my son, heed this counsel of a modest, quiet life. Keep this in thy family, like a provincial map. When thou art dead, let thy successor keep it as the blessed Gospel of the Tournebouches, until such time as it be God's pleasure that there be no Tournebouches in this world.

This letter was found at the time of the inventory made in the house of François Tournebouche, lord of Veretz, Chancellor to Monseigneur le Dauphin, and sentenced at the time of the rebellion of the said

Dauphin against the king, to lose his head and have all his possessions confiscated by decree of the Parliament of Paris. The said letter was delivered to the Governor of Touraine as a curiosity of history, and added to the documents of the prosecution in the Archbishopric of Tours, by me Pierre Gaultier, sheriff, President of the Preudhommes.

The author having finished the transcriptions and deciphering of these parchments, truthfully changing them from their strange language into French, the giver thereof informed him that Rue Chaulde in Tours was, according to some authorities, so named because the sun lay there a longer time than in other places. But, despite this version, persons of sound understanding will find in the ardent nature of the said succuba the true origin of said name. Wherein the author acquiesces. This teaches us not to abuse our bodies, but to use them prudently with a view to our salvation.

DESPAIR IN LOVE

In the days when King Charles the Eighth had the fantasy to decorate the château of Amboise, there came with him divers Italian artisans, master sculptors, fine painters and masons, or architects, who decorated the galleries with noble works which, by neglect, have been sadly injured.

And the court tarried in that sweet spot, and, as all know, the good young sire loved much to see these workmen give form to their fancies. There was among these strangers a Florentine, by name Messer Angelo Cappara, who had great merit, made sculptures and engravings like no other, his age notwithstanding, for some marvelled much to see him in his April and already so learned. In truth, the hairs which impart his virile majesty to a man were hardly grown. Of this Angelo were all the ladies truly enamored, for he was as pretty as a dream, melancholy as the dove left *solus* in its nest by its mate's death. And it happened thus. This sculptor had the great grief of poverty, which doth hinder life in its movements. He lived wretchedly, eating little, ashamed of having nothing, and had recourse to his talents from great despair, seeking by any

means to earn a life of idleness, which is the sweetest of all lives to those whose heart is occupied. In bravado the Florentine came to the court richly clad; and, from the great shyness of youth and ill-fortune, dared not ask his wage from the king, who, seeing him thus bravely clad, believed him to be well-provided. Courtiers, ladies, one and all, were wont to marvel at his beautiful works and the beautiful workman; but of good caroluses he had none. Everyone, the ladies above all, finding him by nature plenteously endowed, esteemed him rich enough in his noble youth, his long, black hair, bright eyes, and thought not of caroluses, minding them of these things and of the rest. And, in truth, they erred not, for those qualities gave to many a dandy of the court fine domains, caroluses and all.

Despite his seeming youth, Messer Angelo had lived twenty years and was no fool, had a great heart, poetic fancies in his head, and was, besides, a man of lofty imagination. But in great humility, like unto all the poor and needy, was abashed before the success of the ignorant. He thought that he must be ill-made in mind or body, and kept his thoughts within himself: I err, in that he told them, in his sleepless nights, to the darkness, to God, the devil, and all the rest. At such times, he lamented that he bore so ardent a heart that, doubtless, the women held aloof from it as from a red-hot iron; then would he say to himself with what fervor he would love a lovely mistress; in what honor she would be held in his life; with what fidelity he

would attach himself to her; with what affection serve her; with what zeal would obey her commands; with what caresses would dispel the light clouds of her sadness and melancholy on the days when the sky was overcast. And, fashioning one in his sculptor's fancy, he would grovel at her feet, kiss them, pat them, caress them, eat them, suck them, as truly as a prisoner runs across the fields, when he sees the green grass through a hole. Then would he speak to her to move her; then, in great excitement, would hug her as he would suffocate her, would outrage her a bit despite his respect, and would bite everything in his bed, in a frenzy, seeking that absent lady, overflowing with courage in his solitude, but sheepish on the morrow when there passed one by. Nathless, all ablaze with his imaginary loves, he would hammer with fresh zeal upon his marble figures and chisel pretty nipples that would bring water to one's mouth to see those luscious fruits of love, to say naught of the other things the which he would round and pare and fondle with his chisel, smooth with his file, and outline in such fashion as to make a very Joseph fully understand their use and to un-Joseph him in a day. And the ladies would recognize themselves in these beauties, and one and all were smitten with Messer Cappara. And Messer Cappara gently touched them visually, swearing that, on the day when one of them should give him but her finger-tip to kiss, he would have all.

Among these dames of high degree, one there was who made inquiry of this gentle Florentine, touching

himself, asking him why he was so wild and if no lady of the court could tame him. Then graciously invited him to call upon her in the evening.

Then did Messer Angelo perfume himself, buy him a cloak of fringed velvet lined with satin, borrow of a friend a jacket with full sleeves, slashed doublet, and silken hose, and mount the stairs hot-footed, inhaling hope at every pore, knowing not what to do with his heart, which leaped and bounded like a kid; and, to say all at one breath, boiling with love from head to foot, so that the sweat of it stood on his back.

In very truth, the lady was fair. Now, Messer Cappara was the better cognizant thereof in that, in his trade, he was a shrewd judge of rounded arms, the outlines of the body, the secret curves of the hips, and other mysteries. And this lady satisfied the special rules of the art, and was, moreover, fair and slender, had a voice to rouse life where it abides, to spur the heart, the brain, and all the rest; in short, she brought into the mind delicious images of love, while seeming not to think of it, the which is the peculiar faculty of these damned women.

The sculptor found her sitting by the fire, in a high chair, and the lady forthwith began to talk at her ease, whereas Messer Angelo dared say no other thing than yes and no, could find no words in his throat, no idea in his head, and would have beaten out his brains against the chimney-piece, had he not had such joy in seeing and hearing his beauteous mistress, who sported like a fly in a sunbeam.

Forasmuch as, by reason of this mute admiration, there they both sat until midnight, losing themselves step by step in the flowery paths of love, the honest sculptor went his way a most happy man. And as he walked he reasoned to himself that, if a noble dame kept him close to her skirts during four hours of the night, 'twould be no great matter to persuade her to leave him there till morning. Now, drawing from these premises several charming corollaries, he determined to demand of her what you know, as if she were a simple woman. Thereupon did he meditate upon killing everyone, the husband, the wife, and himself, for lack of spinning an hour of joy with the aid of his distaff. In truth, he was so sadly overladen with love that he esteemed life to be but a small stake in the game of love, seeing that a single day thereof was worth a thousand lives.

The Florentine chiselled his marble thinking of his evening, and thus did he spoil many noses while dwelling upon something else. Observing this evil result, he laid his work aside, then perfumed himself and hied himself to enjoy his lady's charming words, hoping to cause them to be turned to actions. But, when he was in presence of his sovereign, the female majesty cast its beams upon him, and poor Cappara, so lion-hearted in the street, was of a sudden transformed to a sheep at sight of his victim.

This notwithstanding, as the hour drew nigh when the desires are kindled, he had edged along until he was almost upon the lady, and held her tight. He had haggled for a kiss, had taken it, to his good

fortune; for when they give a kiss the ladies keep the right to refuse; but, when they allow it to be stolen, the lover can steal a thousand. This is why all women are wont to let them be stolen. And the Florentine had taken a goodly number, and things were already in perfect train, when the lady, who had been sparing of her favors, cried:

"Here is my husband!"

In truth, monseigneur was returning from a game of bowls; and the sculptor quitted the field, not without receiving the love-fraught glance of the woman interrupted in her happiness. And that was his only pittance, profit, and enjoyment during a whole month; for, on the very verge of his joy, came always my said lord husband, and always shrewdly arrived between a sharp refusal and those alleviations wherewith women season their refusals; petty favors which rekindle love and make it stronger. And when the impatient sculptor began at once upon his coming the battle of the petticoats, to the end that he might obtain the victory before the coming of the husband, who, I doubt not, reaped the advantages of all this commotion, then did my pretty dame, descrying this desire writ in the sculptor's eyes, seek quarrels and disputes without end. At first would she falsely play the jealous woman, in order to hear the sweet insults of love; then would allay the little fellow's wrath with a moist kiss; then would begin to talk and never cease, saying again and again that lover of hers must be prudent, bow to her wishes, failing which

she could not give him her heart and life; and that a mere desire was but a trifle to offer to one's mistress; and that she was the braver, in that, loving the more, she sacrificed the more; and then, by the way, would exclaim: "Let be!" with the air of a queen. Then would she opportunely assume a grieved air to reply to Cappara's reproaches: "If you be not as I would have you, then will I love you no more."

At last, somewhat too late, the Italian saw that hers was no noble love, one of those which do not measure joy as a miser his crowns, and that, in fine, the lady took delight in seeing him leap upon the coverlet, and in allowing him to be lord of all, provided that he did not trespass on the pretty pleasure-ground of love. At this trade, Cappara conceived a murderous rage, and took with him divers trusty blades, his friends, whom he commissioned to attack the husband when he was returning to lie at his own house after the king's game of bowls. He went to his lady at the accustomed hour. When the sweet frolics of their love were in good train, the which frolics were kisses fully tasted, hair tangled and untangled, hands bitten with frenzy and ears the same—in a word, the whole traffic of love, save only that especial thing which righteous authors justly deem an abomination, said our Florentine between two kisses of rather long duration:

"My sweet, dost love me more than all?"

"Yes!" she replied—for words cost naught.

"Ah! then!" rejoined the lover, "be wholly mine."

"But," said she, "my husband will come."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"I have friends who will detain him, nor let him go until I place a light at yonder window. Then, if he doth make complaint unto the king, my friends will say that they but thought to play the trick on one of our own friends."

"Ah! my love!" said she, "let me but see if all within are silent and in bed."

She rose and placed the light at the window. Seeing which, Messer Cappara blew out the candle, drew his sword, and, taking his stand before that woman whose contempt and evil heart he knew at last—

"I will not slay you, madame," said he, "but I will e'en slash your face in suchwise that you will no longer coquet with poor young lovers, with whose lives you play! You have deceived me shamefully, and are not a worthy woman. You shall learn that a kiss can never be effaced from the life of a true lover, and that the mouth kissed is worth all the rest. You have made my life wretched and a burden for always: therefore do I purpose to make you think always of my death, whereof you are the cause. And, by my soul, never shall you look upon yourself in your mirror without seeing my face there likewise."

Then he raised his arm and moved the sword as if to cut a goodly slice from her fair red cheeks, whereon there were the marks of his kisses.

Thereupon, the lady said to him that he was a disloyal lover.

"Hold your peace!" said he; "you told me that you loved me more than all. Now, you say something else. Each evening have you drawn me up a little higher toward heaven, now you cast me down at one stroke into hell; and think you that your petticoat will save you from a lover's wrath? Not so!"

"Ha! my Angelo, I am thine!" she cried, marvelling to see that man flaming with rage.

But he, recoiling:

"Ha! court gown and evil heart, thou lov'st thy face more dearly than thy lover! Have at thee!"

She turned pale and humbly offered her face to the blow, for well she knew that, at that hour, her past falseness gave the lie to her present love. Thereupon, Angelo dealt her one blow and left the house and the province. The husband, not having been detained, because of the light, which was seen by the Florentines, found his wife minus her left cheek; but she breathed not a word, despite the pain, forasmuch as, since the blow, she loved her Cappara more than life and all. This notwithstanding, the husband was resolved to know whence came this wound. Now, no one having come to his house, save the Florentine alone, he complained to the king, who caused his servitor to be pursued and hanged, the which was done at Blois. On the day of the hanging, a noble lady desired to save this man of heart, whom she esteemed a lover of good stock;

she besought the king to accord his life to her, the which he freely did. But Cappara declared himself to be in every point devoted to his lady, whose memory he could not banish; he turned monk, became a cardinal, a man of great learning, and used to say in his old age that he had lived in the remembrance of the joys tasted in those poor, miserable hours when he was very well and very ill treated by his lady at the same time. There be authors who aver that afterward he went much beyond the petticoat with his lady, whose cheek was made anew; but I am hardly able to place credence therein, inasmuch as he was a man of heart, who had an exalted idea of the joys of love.

This teaches us nothing useful, unless it be that there are in life unhappy meetings, since this tale is true in all respects. If, in other places, the author hath chanced to overpass the truth, this will obtain indulgence for him in amorous circles.

EPILOGUE

Albeit this second Ten hath upon its title-page an inscription wherein it is said that it was finished in a season of snow and cold, it cometh forth in the sweet month of June, when all is green, since the poor muse whose slave the author is hath had more whims than the capricious love of a queen, and hath mysteriously elected to scatter her fruit among the flowers. No one can boast of being the master of that sprite. Sometimes, when a serious thought engrosses the mind and clutches the brain, lo! the laughing wench babbles her pretty chatter in the author's ear, tickles his lips with his pens, dances her sarabands, and makes a turmoil in the house. If, perchance, the scribbler abandons knowledge for diversion, says to her: "Stay, my sweet, I come!" and rises in hot haste, to play with the madcap—exit the wench! She hath returned to her hole, hideth herself therein, rolleth herself in a ball, and groaneth. Seize poker, bâton, club, staff, raise them, beat the wench, heap insults on her—she groaneth. Strip her—she groaneth. Caress her, fondle her—she groaneth. Kiss her, say to her: "Ah! sweetheart!"—she groaneth. Sometimes she is cold, sometimes she is at death's door; adieu

love, adieu laughter, adieu joy, adieu merry tales! Wear mourning for her death, weep for her, believe her dead, groan. And, lo! she lifteth her head, roareth with laughter, spreadeth her white wings, flieth away one knoweth not whither, circleth in the air, capereth, showeth her diabolic tail, her woman's breasts, her sturdy loins, her angel face, shaketh her perfumed hair, soareth in the sun's rays, gleameth in all beauty, changeth color like the pigeon's breast, laugheth till the tears come, throweth the tears from her eyes into the sea, where the fishermen find them transformed to lovely pearls which soon or late adorn the brows of queens; in fine, innumerable antics like a young horse escaped from its halter, showing her virgin croupe and things so sweet, that merely at the sight of them a pope would risk damnation. During this ebullition of the untamed beast, there be dullards and bourgeois who say to the poor poet: "Where is your steed? Where is your Ten? You are a pagan prophet. Yes, you are found out! You go to merry-makings and do naught between your feasts. Where is the work?"

Although I am by nature inclined to gentleness, I would that I might see one of those fellows impaled with a Turkish pale, and send him thus equipped to hunt rabbits.

Here endeth the second Ten. May the devil give it a boost with his horns; so will it be well received by mirth-loving Christendom.

THIRD TEN

PROLOGUE

Divers persons have questioned the author touching the fact that there hath existed such a rage for these Tens, that no year can pass without its quota, and the reason thereof, and why he hath written commas intermingled with vile syllables whereat the ladies publicly do frown, and a thousand other vain follies! The author avers that these treacherous words, strewn like stones along his pathway, have moved him to the lowest depths of his heart, and he is sufficiently aware of his duty, not to fail to gratify his special audience, in this Prologue, with some other arguments than the preceding, for there is need always to reason with children until they are grown, until they understand things and keep quiet, and that he sees many evil-minded fellows in the infinite number of loud-voiced people, who take pleasure in ignoring the subject of these Tens. In the first place, be assured that, if some virtuous dames,—I say virtuous, because street-walkers and women of small consequence do not read these pages, preferring to make their own which are never published, whereas, on the contrary, ladies or good bourgeoises with two pairs of sleeves, full of piety, having tasted I doubt not that

which is treated of herein, read them piously to content the evil spirit, and deem themselves virtuous therein. Do you understand, my excellent reapers of horns? It is much better to be cuckolded by a tale in a book than by a tale told by a gentleman. Therein you save damage, poor fops, and moreover your enamored dame resorts to your haberdashery to still the pregnant agitations aroused in her by the present book. And thereby do these Tens add noble seed to the child-bearing of the country, and keep it in joy, honor, and health. I say joy, in that you derive a goodly supply thereof from these Tales. I say honor, in that you save your nest from the claws of that ever-young demon called *Kockuaige* in the Celtic tongue. I say health, in that this book incites to the thing prescribed by the Church of Salerno, under pain of cerebral plethora. Find me such advantages in other typographically blackened sheets. Ha! ha! where are the books that make children? Seek, and find none. But you will find children in swarms making books whereof is born much *ennui*. I resume my subject. Know, then, that, if certain ladies by nature virtuous, and mentally weak, inveigh publicly against these Tens, a goodly number of them, far from upbraiding the author, confess that they love him very dearly, esteem him a gallant man worthy to be a monk in the abbey of Thelême, and that, for as many reasons as there be stars in heaven, he must not lay aside the lipped flute wherewith he produces these said tales, but must submit to blame and go straight to

his goal, forasmuch as our noble France is a female who doth refuse to grant what you know of, crying, twisting, and saying: "No! no! never! Zounds! monsieur, what do you mean to do? I could not, you would ruin me!" Then, when the Ten is writ and perfected in all daintiness, doth exclaim: "Hé! my master, will there not be others?"

Therein rely upon the author as a stout-hearted wight who hath no fear of the shrieks, tears, and writhings of the lady whom you call Glory, Fashion, or Public Favor, inasmuch as he hath certain knowledge that she is a very jade and of a nature to assent to an honest rape. Well doth he know that in France her war-cry is *Mount Joy!* A noble cry, believe him, but which some writers have distorted, and which signifies: "Joy is not on earth, but yonder: act quickly; if not, adieu!" The author hath this meaning of the phrase from Rabelais, who told it to him. If you search history, do you find that France hath ever breathed a word when she was joyously mounted, gallantly mounted, frantically mounted, savagely mounted? She is furious in everything, and takes more pleasure in being ridden than in drinking. Look you! see you not that these tales are French in joy, French in their subject, French before, French behind, French everywhere? Avaunt, then, knaves! Play, music! Silence, hypocrites! Forward, ye lechers! My gentle pages, place your soft hands in the hands of the ladies, and scratch their palms; their hands, I say! Ha! ha! these be high-sounding, peripatetic arguments,

or the author knows naught of sonorousness or of Aristotelianism. He hath on his side the crown of France, the king's oriflamme, and Monsieur Saint-Denis, who, having lost his head, cried: *Monte-ma-Joye!*—Will ye say, quadrupeds, that he said it not? Not so. Of a surety it was heard by many at the time; but, in these days of profound destitution, ye no longer give credence to good monks in aught!

The author hath not said all. Know, all ye who read these Tens with eyes and hands, feel them in the head only, and love them for the joy they give, which goes to your heart, know that the author, having in an evil hour mislaid his axe, *id est*, his heritage, which hath not been found, was bereft in every point. Thereupon, he cried out after the manner of the wood-chopper in the prologue to the book of his dear master Rabelais, in order to be heard by the Gentleman on High, Suzerain of all things, and to obtain from Him another axe. The said Most High, still busied with the councils of the time, bade Mercury throw down to him an inkhorn with two cups, whereon were engraved, by way of motto, these three letters: *Ave.* Then did the poor child, perceiving no other course, take great care to shake the said vessel, to seek its hidden meaning, to interpret its mysterious words, and to find their soul. Now, first he saw that God was courteous, like a great lord as He is, for that He hath this world and doth look up to none. But inasmuch as, reviewing mentally the years of his youth, he found therein no courtesy proffered to God, the author

much mistrusted that vain civility, and reflected deeply thereon, without deriving any real benefit from that celestial instrument. But, by dint of turning and re-turning the said inkhorn, gazing at it, studying it, filling it, emptying it, tapping it questioningly, cleaning it, placing it upright, placing it on its side, turning it upside-down, he read the letters backward: *Eva*. What is Eva, if not all women in a single one? Thus was it said to the author by the divine voice: "Think on woman; woman will cure thy wound, will fill the void in thy game-bag; woman is thy property: have but one woman; dress and undress and cosset that woman; deal in woman; woman is everything; woman hath her inkhorn; draw from that bottomless inkhorn; woman loves love, make love to her with the inkhorn; but tickle her fancies and joyously portray to her the thousand portraits of love in its millions of pretty ways; woman is generous, and all for one, one for all, will pay the painter and furnish the bristles of the brush. And, lastly, ply thy wit on what is written: *Ave*, hail: *Eva*, woman. Or: *Eva*, woman: *ave*, hail or saves—*salue* or *saulve*.—Why, yes, she doeth and undoeth. Give me the inkhorn, then! What doth woman most love? what doth woman want? all the things peculiar to love, and woman is right. To bring forth, to produce, is in imitation of nature, which is always in labor! So give me woman! give me *Eva!*"

Thereupon, the author proceeded to draw upon this fruitful inkhorn wherein was a cerebral *purée*,

concocted of the divine virtues, in talismanic fashion. From one cup flowed forth grave matters which were writ in brown ink; and from the other, merry things, which gave a joyous ruddy tinge to the leaves. The poor author hath often, for lack of care, mingled the inks, now here, now there. But, as soon as the ponderous sentences, difficult to plane, varnish, and polish, of some work to suit the taste of to-day, were finished, the author, eager to make merry, despite the small quantity of laughing ink in the left cup, would ardently steal a penful thereof with infinite delight. The said penfuls are, in truth, these same Droll Tales, whereof the authority cannot be questioned, in that it floweth from a divine source, as by the author's artless avowal doth appear.

Some evil-minded persons will cry out again at this. But find a fragment of a man perfectly content upon this lump of mud. Is it not a shame? Herein the author hath wisely borne himself in emulation of God. And this is proved by *atqui*. Hark ye; is it not proved with all clearness to men of learning that the sovereign Lord of the worlds hath made an endless number of heavy, ponderous, solemn machines, with great wheels, huge chains, terrible springs, and shocking motions complicated by screws and weights after the manner of huge spits; but hath likewise diverted Himself with little trifles and grotesque things, light as air; that He hath made likewise many artless and amusing creations whereat you laugh on seeing them? Is it not

true? Thus, in every concentric work, like the very spacious structure undertaken by the author, in order to model himself upon the laws of our said Lord, one must needs fashion divers dainty flowers, diverting insects, fine dragons, distorted, crooked, and gayly colored—nay, even gilded, albeit he often lacks gold—and cast them at the feet of his snow-capped mountains, heaps of rocks, and other frowning philosophies, long and awe-inspiring works, marble colonnades, true thoughts carved in porphyry. Ah! filthy beasts, who cry shame and spurn the fugues, fantasies, anagrams, music, and roulades of the pretty diverting muse, will ye not pare your claws, and no longer scratch her white skin, with its azure veins, her amorous loins, her graceful flanks, her feet which remain prudently in the bed, her satin face, her gleaming flesh, her unembittered heart? Ha! wooden-heads, what will ye say when ye read here that this honest maid came forth from the heart of France, is in harmony with woman's nature, hath been hailed with a sweet *Ave* by the angels, in the person of Mercury the giver, and, lastly, is the purest quintessence of art? In this work are found necessity, virtue, fantasy, woman's desire, the desire of a downright Pantagruelist,—aye, everything. Hold your peace, salute the author, and let his inkhorn with its two cups endow the Gay Science with the hundred glorious Droll Tales.

Avaunt, then, knaves! Play, music! Silence, hypocrites! Out upon you, dullards! Forward, ye

lechers! My pretty pages, give your soft hands to the ladies and scratch their palms, saying: "Read and laugh." Afterward, you may say some other diverting thing to them, to make them roar, for, when they are merry, their lips are parted and they resist love but faintly.

Written at Geneva, at the Hôtel de l'Arcq, Les Eaux-Vives, February 1834.

PERSEVERANCE IN LOVE

In the early years of the thirteenth century after the coming of our divine Saviour, there happened in the city of Paris an amorous adventure, through the act of a man of Tours, whereat the town and the king's court did marvel greatly. As for the clergy, you will see by that which is set forth below, the part played by them in this adventure, whereof the proofs were by them preserved.

The said man, called the Tourangean by the common people, for that he was born in our joyous province of Touraine, was rightfully named Anseau. In his old age, the goodman returned to his province and was mayor of Saint-Martin, so saith the chronicle of the abbey and the town; but at Paris he was a noble goldsmith. And in his prime, by reason of his great honesty, his craftsmanship, or for other reason, he became a bourgeois of Paris and subject of the king, whose protection he bought, according to the custom of that time. He had a house built by himself, free of all quit-rent, hard by the church of Saint-Leu on Rue Saint-Denis, where his forge was well known to them who sought beauteous jewels.

Albeit he was a Tourangean and had life to sell, he had remained virtuous as a true saint, the blandishments of the great city notwithstanding, and had plucked the leaves of his green season without ever having allowed his breeches to enter a brothel. Many will say that this passeth the powers of belief which God hath implanted in us to assist the faith due to the mysteries of the holy religion: wherefore there is need to prove abundantly the secret cause of this goldsmith's chastity. And, first, know that he came from his native place on foot, poorer than Job, as the old saying is, and that, contrariwise to the people of our province, who have but one first heat, he had a nature of metal, and persisted in his purposes like a monk's vengeance. As journeyman, he worked always; as master, he still worked; always learning new secrets, seeking new methods, and, in his search, discovering inventions of every sort. Belated passers-by, watchmen or evil-doers saw always a lighted lamp through the goldsmith's window, and the worthy goldsmith always hammering, carving, paring, chiselling, filing, smoothing, in company with some apprentice; doors closed, ears open. Poverty engendered toil, toil engendered his notable virtue, virtue engendered great riches. Hear this, ye children of Cain, who eat doubloons and void water! If the honest goldsmith had within him those fanciful desires, which pull a poor, single man hither and thither, when the devil threatens to carry him off on a sign of the cross, the Tourangean beat his metal the harder, summoned

the rebellious sprites to his brain by striving to produce exquisite things, dainty engravings, gold figures, lovely silver vessels wherewith he cooled the ardor of his Venus. Add to these things that this Tourangean was a simple soul, of artless understanding, fearing God first of all, then robbers, then nobles, and turmoil above all things. Although he had two hands, he never did but one thing. His manner of speech was soft as a bride's before the wedding. Although the clergy, men-at-arms, and others deemed him not overlearned, he knew his mother's Latin and spoke it fluently, nor waited to be asked. Secondly, the good people of Paris had taught him to walk straight, not to beat the bushes for another, to measure his passions by the yard-stick of his revenues, to give no one license to take of his leather to make shoes, to watch over the seed, not to put trust in the outside of a box, not to say what he did, and do what he said, to let nothing fall but water, to have a better memory than flies are wont to have, to keep his labor for himself alone, likewise his purse, and to sell his jewels for more than they cost; of all which precepts the prudent observance gave him as much wisdom as he needed to sell his wares in ease and content. Thus did he, without vexing anyone. And, discussing this good, little man in his private life, many glancing at him said:

"By my faith, well would I like to be that jeweller, even should I be obliged to wade to my knee through the mud of Paris for a hundred years."

As well might they have wished to be King of

France, inasmuch as the jeweller had stout, nervous, hairy arms, and so wondrous hard that, when he clinched his fists, pincers handled by the strongest would not have opened his hand. Be sure that what he had was his in very truth. Moreover had he teeth to bite iron, a stomach to dissolve it and digest it, posterior muscles to void it without tearing, and shoulders to uphold the world, like to that heathen lord to whom that mission was long ago entrusted and whom the coming of Jesus Christ did opportunely relieve. He was, in truth, one of those men made at a single stroke, who are the best, since they who must needs be retouched are good for naught thus patched and built at divers times. In a word, Master Anseau was a man to the very marrow, with a lion's face, and from under his eyebrows flashed a glance fit to melt gold, had the fire in his forge failed to burn; but a limpid moisture placed in his eyes by the Moderator of all things tempered this great ardor; otherwise would he have burned everything. Was not this a fine slip of a man?

After proof of his cardinal virtues, some persisted in inquiring why the honest jeweller had remained as virtuous as an oyster, inasmuch as these natural properties are in good taste in all places. But do these obstinate critics know what it is to love? Ho! ho! a fig for them! A lover's trade is to go, come, listen, watch, hold his peace, speak, keep out of sight, make himself great, make himself small, make himself nothing at all; make himself agreeable, make music, suffer, seek the devil where he

is, count the gray peas on the drying-board, find flowers under the snow, say *paternosters* to the moon, caress the house-cat and dog, salute friends, flatter the aunt's gout or catarrh, and say to her at the fitting time: "You have a fine face and will write the epitaph of the human race."—And to get scent of what pleases all the relations, tread not on anyone's corns, break no glasses, fritter away time, wash bricks, say nothings, hold ice in his hand, marvel at baubles, cry: "That is well!"—or: "On my word, madame, you are very lovely so!"—And vary it in a thousand ways. Then he must be ruffled and pleated, starched like a nobleman, have a quick and prudent tongue, endure with laughter all the ills the devil inflicts, bury all his wrath, hold his temper in leash, have the finger of God and the tail of the devil, reward the mother, reward the cousin, reward the maid, in a word, wear always a pleasant face, for lack of which the woman escapes and leaves you there, without giving a single Christian reason. Lastly, even though the lover of the kindest wench that ever God made in a moment of good humor, should have talked like a good book, jumped like a flea, twirled like a die, played the harp like King David, performed the hundred thousand contortions of hell, and built for the said wench the devil's Corinthian order of columns, if he but lack the special, secret thing wherein his lady most delighteth, which often she doth not know herself, and which she needs must know, the wench quits him like a red leper.

She is within her right. No one could find cause for blame therein. At such times, some men become more sulky, angry, frantic than you could imagine. Some, indeed, have killed themselves for this manœuvring of the petticoat. Herein is man distinguished from the beast, since no animal hath ever lost his wits from love-despair; the which proves, moreover, that beasts have no heart. Thus is the lover's trade the trade of mountebank, soldier, charlatan, merry-andrew, prince, clown, king, idler, monk, dupe, pimp, liar, braggart, sycophant, dullard, wind-chaser, blockhead, fool, knave, a trade from which Jesus abstained, and which, in imitation of Him, men of lofty understanding disdain; a trade wherein a man of worth is required to spend, first of all, his time, his life, his blood, his best words, in addition to his heart and mind and brain, whereof all women are cruelly fond, because, when their tongues begin to chatter, they say to one another that if they have not all of a man, they have nothing of him. Be sure, too, that there be she-monkeys who still frown and scold even when the man makes his hundred strokes for them, to the end that they may learn if there be one hundred and one, forasmuch as they want in everything the greatest number, from a spirit of conquest and tyranny. And this exalted jurisprudence hath been always in full force by the custom of Paris, where woman receives more salt at baptism than in any other place, and thereby are malicious from birth.

Thus the jeweller, always planted at his bench,

burnishing gold and heating silver, could in nowise heat love, nor burnish his fancies and make them shine, nor show himself bedecked with finery, nor waste his substance in monkeyish antics, nor go in quest of a mussel with ears. Now, since maidens in Paris no more fall into the beds of bachelors than it rains roasted peacocks in the streets, even though the bachelor be a royal goldsmith, the Tourangean had the advantage of having, as hath been said, a virtuous man in his shirt. And yet the bourgeois could not have his eyes always closed to the advantages of nature wherewith the ladies, and likewise the bourgeoises with whom he haggled over the value of his jewels, were amply supplied and were proud thereof. Often, therefore, after listening to the honeyed words of women who would fain wheedle him and plied him with their cajoleries to obtain some favor from him, did the good Tourangean walk through the streets as dreamy as a poet, more downcast than a nestless cuckoo, saying to himself: "I must e'en take a wife. She would sweep the house, keep my plates warm, fold the linen, mend my clothes, sing cheerily in the house, torment me to make me do everything to her liking therein, and say to me as they all say to their husbands when they would have a trinket: 'Oh! my dear love, see this, is it not lovely?' And everyone in the quarter would think of my wife and say of me: 'There goes a happy man!'"

Then would he marry, give the wedding-feast, caress Mademoiselle Goldsmith, dress her superbly,

give her a golden chain, love her from head to foot, leave in her hands the whole government of the household, save the money-box, bestow her in her chamber overhead, well windowed and carpeted, with a wondrous chest, hung with tapestries, in a huge bed with twisted columns and curtains of *cental cytrin;* would buy her many fine mirrors; and he had always half a score of children of his and hers by the time he reached his house. But there wife and children vanished with the stroke of his hammer; he transformed his melancholy fancies into fanciful designs, fashioned his thoughts of love into strange trinkets which greatly pleased his customers, who knew not how many wives and children were lost in the goodman's masterpieces, who, as he acquired more talent in his art, grew weaker.

Now, had not God taken pity on him, he would have gone from this world not knowing what love was, but would have known it in the other without the metamorphosis of the flesh which spoils it, according to Messire Plato, a man of authority, but who, because he was not a Christian, hath gone astray. Alas! these preliminary pages are idle digressions and tedious commentaries, wherewith the unfaithful oblige a man to swathe a tale like a child in its swaddling-clothes, when it should run about all nude. May the devil give them a clyster with his red-hot three-pronged fork! I am going to tell the whole story without beating about the bush.

Now this is what happened to the goldsmith in the one and fortieth year of his age. One Lord's Day,

as he walked on the left bank of the Seine, he wandered, by dint of thinking of marriage, even to the meadow which was afterward called the Pré-aux-Clercs, which was then in the domain of the Abbey of Saint-Germain and not of the University. There, still walking on, the Tourangean found himself in the open fields, and there fell in with a poor girl, who, seeing that he was well dressed, saluted him, saying: "God be with you, monseigneur!"

When she said these words, her voice had such a warming sweetness that the goldsmith felt his spirits revived by that feminine melody, and conceived a fancy for the girl, the more that, tickled with the thought of marriage as he was, everything favored the idea. Nathless, as he had passed the wench, he dared not return, for that he was as timid as a girl who would die in her skirts ere she would lift them for his pleasure; but, when he was a bow-shot away, he bethought himself that a man who had been ten years a master goldsmith, had become a bourgeois, and was twice the age of a dog, might well look upon a woman's face, if he were so inclined, the more as his imagination spurred him keenly on. Wherefore he turned about as if he had changed the object of his walk, and saw the girl holding by an old rope her wretched cow which browsed on the grass that grew along the edge of a ditch close beside the road.

"Ah! my pretty one," said he, "you must be very poor that you work thus with your hands on the Lord's Day. Fear you not to be put in prison?"

"Monseigneur," the girl replied, casting down her eyes, "I have naught to fear, for I belong to the abbey. The lord abbot hath given us leave to take the cow to pasture after Vespers."

"But do you love your cow better than the salvation of your soul?"

"Nay, monseigneur, our cow is well-nigh half of our poor life."

"I am amazed, my child, to find you poor, clad thus in rags, dressed like a fagot, running about barefooted in the fields on Sunday, when you carry with you more treasures than you tread upon in the whole circuit of the abbot's domain. The men of the town must of a surety pursue you and torment you with love."

"*Nenni*, monseigneur, I belong to the abbey," she said, showing the goldsmith a collar on her left arm, such as the beasts wear in the fields, but without the little bell. And with that she cast such a sorrowful glance at the bourgeois, that he was sore afflicted, forasmuch as the eyes impart the emotions of the heart when they are keen.

"Oh! what is this?" said he, seeking to know all.

And he touched the collar whereon were engraved the arms of the abbey most distinctly, but he chose not to see them.

"Monseigneur, I am the daughter of an *homme de corps*. Therefore he who should unite himself to me in marriage would fall into serfdom, even though he were a bourgeois of Paris, and would belong, body and worldly goods, to the abbey. If he loved

me otherwise than as his wife, still would his children belong to the domain. Because of this am I neglected by all, abandoned like a poor beast of the field. But, and this grieves me sore, I shall be, at the pleasure of monseigneur l'abbé, united to an *homme de corps* in due time. And were I less ugly than I am, at the sight of my collar, the most amorous man would shun me like the black plague."

As she spake, she pulled her cow by the rope to make her follow them.

"How old are you?" queried the goldsmith.

"I know not, monseigneur; but our lord abbot hath it writ down."

This great hardship touched the goodman's heart, who had long eaten the bread of misfortune. He measured his steps by the girl's, and thus they walked by the river in silence, well filled with thoughts. The bourgeois gazed at the noble brow, the stout red arms, the regal form, the dusty feet, but shaped like those of a Virgin Mary, and the sweet features of that maid, who was the veritable image of Sainte Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris and of maids who live in the fields. And be sure that this Joseph, all new from head to foot, divined the dainty white harvest of the maid's breasts, which were, in graceful modesty, most carefully covered with a wretched neckcloth, and coveted them even as a schoolboy covets a red apple on a hot day. Be sure, too, that those goodly morsels of nature denoted a wench fashioned with delicious completeness, like all that the monks possess.

Now, the more it was forbidden to the bourgeois to touch, the more did his mouth water for that fruit of love, and his heart leaped up into his throat.

"You have a fine cow," said he.

"Do you wish a little milk?" she made answer. "It is so warm in these first days of May. You are a long way from the town."

In truth, the sky was blue, without clouds, and the sun burned like a forge; everything glowed with youth,—leaves, air, maids, and virtuous men: everything burned, was green, and smelt like balsam. That ingenuous offer, without hope of reward, for a gold bezant would not have paid for the charm of those words, and the modesty of the gesture with which the poor maid turned about, oppressed the goldsmith's heart, who craved the power to put that girl-serf in a queen's skin, and Paris at her feet.

"*Nenni*, sweetheart, I have no thirst for milk, but e'en for you, whom I would that I had power to set free."

"That cannot be, and I shall die belonging to the abbey. For many years we have lived there, from father to son, from mother to daughter. Like my poor ancestors, I shall pass my life upon this land, likewise my children, for the abbey doth not leave us without children."

"What!" said the Tourangean, "hath no gallant sought to buy your liberty for your bright eyes, as I bought mine from the king?"

"Nay, it would cost too dear! And so they

whom I please at first sight, go hence as they came."

"And you have not thought of going to some other land in company of a lover mounted on a trusty steed?"

"Ah, yes! But, monseigneur, an I were taken I should be hanged at the least, and my gallant, even though he were a great noble, would lose more than one domain, besides all the rest. I am not worth so many treasures. The abbey's arms are longer than my feet are swift. And then I live in full obedience to God, who hath placed me here."

"And what doth your father?"

"He tends vines in the garden of the abbey."

"And your mother?"

"She does the washing."

"And what is your name?"

"I have no name, my dear lord, my father was baptized Etienne, my mother is La Etienne, and I am Tiennette, at your service."

"Sweetheart," said the jeweller, "never hath woman pleased me as you please me, and I believe your heart to be full of loyal treasures. Therefore, since you came before my eyes at the instant that I had firmly resolved to take a companion, methinks I see herein counsel from Heaven, and, if I displease you not, I beg you to accept me for your friend."

Again did the maid lower her eyes. These words were spoken in suchwise, in so grave a tone and with such penetrating earnestness, that the said Tiennette wept.

"No, monseigneur," she replied, "I should be the cause of innumerable vexations to you, and of evil fortune. For a poor *fille de corps*, I have talked overmuch."

"Ha!" said Anseau, "you know not, my child, with what manner of man you have to do."—Thereupon, he crossed himself, clasped his hands, and added:

"I promise Monsieur Saint Eloy, under whose invocation goldsmiths are, to make two niches of silver-gilt, of the finest workmanship wherewith I am permitted to decorate them. One shall be for a statue of the Virgin, to thank her for the freedom of my dear wife, and the other for my said patron saint, if I have full success in the undertaking of the enfranchisement of Tiennette, *fille de corps*, here present, for whom I place my trust in his aid. Furthermore, I swear by my eternal salvation to persevere courageously in this affair, to spend all that I possess therein, and to abandon it only with my life.—God hath heard me," he said, "and thou, sweetheart?" he added, turning to the maid.

"Oh! monseigneur, look! my cow is running away," she cried, weeping at her man's knees. "I will love you all my life, but do you retract your vow."

"Let us go and seek the cow," replied the goldsmith, raising her without daring to kiss her as yet, although the maid was well disposed thereto.

"Yes," said she, "for I shall be beaten."

And behold the goldsmith running after the damned cow, who paid but little heed to love-affairs; but she

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was soon caught by the horns and held as in a vice by the hands of the Tourangean, who, at a word, would have tossed her in the air like a straw.

"Adieu! my love. If you go into the city, come to my house, close by Saint-Leu. My name is Master Anseau, and I am goldsmith to our lord the King of France, at the sign of *Saint-Eloy*. Promise me to be in this field on the next Lord's Day; fail not to come, even though it rain halberds."

"Yes, my good lord. For this would I leap over the hedges, too, and, in gratitude, would e'en be yours without trouble and cause you no harm, at the price of my joy to come. Awaiting the blessed hour, I will pray to God for you most earnestly."

Then did she stand like a stone saint, stirring not, until she could no longer see the bourgeois, who went away at a slow pace, turning his head at times to look at her. And when the bourgeois was far away and beyond her sight, she abode there until night, lost in her meditations, knowing not if she had not dreamed that which had befallen her. Then returned late to her home, where she was beaten for having tarried too long, but did not feel the blows.

The worthy bourgeois lost his appetite for food and drink and closed his workshop, being smitten with the maid, thinking only of the maid, seeing the maid everywhere; and to him everything was the maid. And on the morrow betook himself to the abbey, in great apprehension, to speak to the lord abbot. But on the road bethought himself,

with much prudence, to place himself under the protection of one of the king's friends, and, to that end, returned to the court, which was then in the city. Now, inasmuch as he was esteemed for his virtue, beloved for his sweet works and his obliging nature, the king's chamberlain, for whom he had but lately made for the lady of his heart a sweet-meat box of gold and gems unique in its workmanship, promised his aid, ordered his horse and a hackney for the goldsmith, with whom he rode forthwith to the abbey, and asked to see the abbot, who was Monseigneur Hugon de Senecterre, then three-and-ninety years of age. Having, thereupon, come to the audience-hall with the goldsmith, who was sorely distressed in anticipation of his sentence, the chamberlain begged Abbot Hugon to grant him in advance a favor very easy to grant, which would be most gratifying to him. To which the lord abbot made answer, shaking his head, that the canons inhibited and forbade him thus to pledge his word.

"This, my dear father," said the chamberlain, "is the goldsmith to the court, who hath conceived a great love for a bondmaiden belonging to your abbey, and I charge you—in consideration of my promise to gratify you in that one of your wishes which you must wish to see fulfilled—to set this maid free."

"Who is she?" the abbot asked the bourgeois.

"Her name is Tiennette," he replied timidly.

"Oho!" said good old Hugon, with a smile. "So

the bait hath brought us a fine fish! This is a grave matter, and I cannot decide it alone."

"I know, my father, what those words are worth," said the chamberlain, frowning.

"Fair sire," said the abbot, "do you know what the maid is worth?"

The abbot bade Tiennette be summoned, telling his clerk to dress her in beautiful clothes and make her as fine as possible.

"Your love is in danger," said the chamberlain to the goldsmith, leading him aside. "Abandon this fancy. Everywhere, even at court, will you find good women, young and fair, who will gladly marry you. If need be, the king will aid you in the purchase of some seigniory which, in due course of time, would enable you to found a noble family. Are you sufficiently well supplied with crowns to become the stem of some noble line?"

"I cannot, monseigneur," replied Anseau. "I have made a vow."

"Let us look, then, to the purchase of this maid's manumission. I know these monks. With them money does everything."

"Monseigneur," said the goldsmith to the abbot, returning to him, "it is your mission and care to represent here on earth God's mercy, who doth often show His clemency toward us and hath infinite store of compassion for our miseries. Now will I name you day and night in my prayers during the rest of my days, nor will I ever forget that I owe my happiness to your charity, if you will deign to aid me to enjoy

this maid in lawful wedlock, without detaining in servitude the children to be born of that union. And for this favor will I make you a casket wherein to place the Blessed Sacrament, of such fine workmanship, enriched with gold and gems and winged shapes of angels, that there will be none other such in all Christendom; which will remain unique, will rejoice your sight, and will be so truly the glory of your altar that the people of the city and foreign lords, all will flock to see it, so magnificent will it be."

"My son," replied the abbot, "have you lost your wits? If you are resolved to have this maid for your lawful wife, then will your goods and your person become the property of the Chapter of the abbey."

"Yes, monseigneur, I am deep in love with this poor maid, and more touched by her misery and her truly Christian heart than by her bodily perfections; but," he added, with tears in his eyes, "I am even more amazed by your cruelty, and so I tell you, knowing that my fate is in your hands. Yes, monsieur, I know the law. But if my worldly goods must fall into your power, if I become an *homme de corps*, if I lose my family and my bourgeois privileges, still shall I keep the engine won by toil and study, and which lies here," he said, striking his brow, "in a place where none but myself, save God, can be lord and master. And your whole abbey could not buy the unique creations which are brooding there. You shall have my

body, my wife, my children; but that engine of mine naught shall make over to you, not even torture, since I am stronger than iron is hard and more patient than pain is cruel."

Having thus spoken, the goldsmith, enraged by the abbot's calmness, who seemed resolved to acquire for the abbey the goodman's doubloons, smote with his fist an oaken chair and broke it into little pieces, for it flew apart as under the blow of a club.

"See, monseigneur, what manner of retainer you will have, and of an artisan of divine things you will make a veritable draught-horse."

"My son," replied the abbot, "you have wrongfully broken a chair and lightly judged my heart. This maid is the abbey's and not mine. I am the faithful servant of the rights and customs of this glorious monastery. Although I can grant to this woman's womb license to produce free children, I must account therefor to God and to the abbey. Now, since there hath been an altar here, and bondmen and monks, *id est*, from time immemorial, never hath been seen the case of a bourgeois becoming the chattel of the abbey by marriage with a bondmaiden. Needs must we then exert the right and make use of it, to the end that it be not lost, enfeebled, decrepit, nor fall into desuetude, the which would occasion troubles innumerable. And this doth more advantage the State and the abbey than your caskets, however beautiful they be, forasmuch as we have a treasure which will enable us to purchase fine jewels, whereas no treasure can establish laws

and customs. I appeal to monseigneur the king's chamberlain, who is witness of the infinite pains with which our sire doth every day contend for the execution of his ordinances."

"That is to close my mouth," said the chamberlain.

The goldsmith, who was no great scholar, was lost in thought. Then came Tiennette, clean as a pewter plate newly rubbed by a good housewife, her hair brushed back, clad in a gown of white wool with a blue girdle, with tiny shoes and white hose on her feet,—in fine, so regally beautiful, so noble in her bearing, that the goldsmith was petrified with ecstasy, and the chamberlain thought that he had never seen creature so perfect. Thereupon, he considered that there was too great risk for the poor goldsmith in that spectacle, so haled him back to the city in hot haste, and urged him to think well on the affair, forasmuch as the abbot would not manumit so tempting a bait for bourgeois and nobles in the Parisian stream.

In truth, the Chapter caused the poor goldsmith to be informed that, should he wed that maid, he must needs resolve to surrender his house and worldly goods to the abbey, to acknowledge himself a serf, likewise the children to be born of the said marriage; but that, by special favor, the abbot would leave him in his house, on condition that he should furnish a list of all his furniture, pay a yearly rent, and live, during a week each year, in a hovel belonging to the abbey, thereby performing an overt act of servitude.

The goldsmith, to whom everyone talked of the obstinacy of monks, saw that the abbot would adhere immutably to this decree, and was in heart-rending despair. Sometimes he thought of setting fire to the five corners of the abbey; sometimes of luring the abbot to some place where he could torture him until he should have signed a deed of manumission for Tiennette; in fine, a thousand dreams which vanished into air. But, after much lamentation, resolved to take the maid and fly to a safe place whence no one could draw him forth, and made his preparations to that end, so that, when he was without the realm, the king and his friends could better handle the monks and bring them to reason. But the goodman reckoned without his abbot, for, going to the meadow, he saw no Tiennette, and learned that she was confined to the abbey with such great strictness that, to obtain her, he must lay siege to the monastery.

Thereupon did Master Anseau vent his chagrin in complaints, outbursts of anger, and lamentations. Throughout the city, bourgeois and housewives talked of this adventure, whereof the noise was such that the king, espying the old abbot at court, asked him why he yielded not in this case to his goldsmith's great love, nor practised Christian charity.

"For the reason, monseigneur," replied the priest, "that all rights are welded together like the pieces of a suit of armor, and if there be a flaw in one, the whole falls. An if this maid were taken

from us against our will, and the custom not observed, ere long your subjects would take away your crown, and would stir up on all sides great revolts, in order to abolish the tolls and taxes which vex the common people."

The king's mouth was closed. Then was everyone most curious to know the end of this adventure. So great was the curiosity, that certain nobles betted that the Tourangean would abandon his love, and the ladies betted the contrary. The goldsmith having complained, with many tears, to the queen that the monks had robbed him of the sight of his beloved, she deemed the act abominable and wrongful. Thereafter, upon her writing to the lord abbot, the Tourangean was allowed to go every day to the *parloir* of the abbey, whither came Tiennette, but in the keeping of an old monk, and always arrayed with great magnificence like a lady. Thus had the two lovers no other privilege than to see each other and speak to each other, and could not snatch a poor crumb of pleasure, while their love waxed ever greater. One day, Tiennette spake thus to her friend:

"My dear lord, I have resolved to make you a present of my life, thereby to relieve you from your pain. In this wise. By making inquiry touching every point, I have found a means to defeat the rights of the abbey and to give you all the happiness which you anticipate from my fruition. The ecclesiastical judge hath said that inasmuch as you would become *homme de corps* by accession only and

were not born *homme de corps*, your servitude would cease with the cause which made you a serf. So, then, if you love me more than all else, sacrifice your worldly goods to obtain our happiness and marry me. Then, when you have enjoyed me and have had your will of me to your heart's content, before I have offspring will I purposely kill myself, and thus will you become free once more. At the least, that will be a matter wherein you will have the favor of the king, who is, so 'tis said, most well-inclined toward you. And I doubt not that God will forgive me for my death, which I shall have sought in order to set free my lord husband."

"Dear Tiennette," cried the goldsmith, "all is said! I will be *homme de corps*, and thou shalt live to be my joy while my life lasts. In thy companionship the most cruel chains will never be heavy, and little care I whether I have *deniers* of my own, since all my wealth is in thy heart and my only pleasure in thy soft body. I place my trust in Monsieur Saint Eloy, who will deign to cast a pitying eye upon us in this our misery, and will protect us from all harm. I go hence to a scrivener for the preparation of the deeds and contracts. At the least, dear flower of my life, thou wilt be bravely clad, well lodged, and served as a queen during thy life, in that the lord abbot leaves to us the usufruct of my acquisitions."

Tiennette, weeping and laughing, defended herself against her good-fortune, and would fain have died, in order not to reduce a free man to servitude; but

honest Anseau said such soft words to her and threatened so firmly to follow her to the grave, that she gave her assent to the said marriage, thinking that she could kill herself at any time after tasting the joys of love.

When it was known in the city that the Tourangean had submitted to surrender his liberty and riches for his sweetheart, one and all were curious to see him. The ladies of the court burdened themselves with trinkets in order to speak to him; and there fell upon him from the clouds great numbers of women for all the time that he had been bereft of them. But, if certain ones came nigh Tiennette in beauty, not one had her heart. And when he heard the clock strike the hour of servitude and love, Anseau melted all his gold into a royal crown, studded with all the pearls and diamonds he possessed; then went in secret and gave it to the queen, saying:

"Madame, I know not to whom to entrust this my fortune. To-morrow all that is found in my house will be the property of the damned monks who have had no pity on me. Deign, therefore, to keep this for me. 'Tis but feeble thanks for the joy which by your means I have had in seeing her I love, since no sum of money is worth one of her glances. I know not what may become of me. But if some day my children shall be set free, I have faith in your royal generosity."

"Well said, goodman," said the king. "Some day the abbey will have need of my aid, and I shall not lose the memory of this."

There was an enormous crowd in the abbey to witness Tiennette's nuptials, to whom the queen gave wedding-garments, and to whom the king granted leave to wear gold ringlets in her ears every day. When came the comely couple from the abbey to the house of Anseau, who had become a serf, hard by Saint-Leu, there were torches at the windows to see them pass, and in the streets two lines of sight-seers as at a royal procession. The poor husband had fashioned for himself a silver collar, which he wore on his left arm, in token of his servitude to the abbey of Saint-Germain. But, despite his servitude, the people shouted to him: *Noël! Noël!* as to a newly-crowned king. And the goodman bowed most heartily, happy as a lover, and very joyful in the homage one and all paid to the grace and modesty of Tiennette. Also, the goodman found green boughs and a wreath of violets on his sign-post, and the principal men of the quarter all were there, who, to his great honor, did serenade him and cry out to him: "You will always be a noble-hearted man, despite the abbey!"

Doubt not that the husband and wife foregathered to their hearts' desire, and that the bourgeois dealt his sweetheart many a lusty thrust, and she, like a stout country wench, was of a nature to return them; and they lived a full month, as light of heart as doves who build their nest in springtime, straw by straw. Tiennette was enraptured with her fine house and with the customers who came and went their way marvelling at her. That month of flowers

past, there came one day, in great pomp, good old Abbot Hugon, their lord and master, who entered the house, which no longer belonged to the goldsmith, but to the Chapter, then said he to the husband and wife:

"My children, you are free, enfranchised, quit of everything. And I must tell you that, at the very first, I was greatly moved by the love which joined you to each other. And so, the rights of the abbey being recognized, I was, in my own mind, resolved to make your joy complete, having first tested your fealty in God's crucible. Nor will this manumission cost you aught."

Having said this, he tapped them gently on the cheek, and they fell at his knees weeping for joy, for good and sufficient reasons. The Tourangean made known to the people of the quarter, who had gathered in the street, the good abbot's generosity and benediction. Then did Master Anseau escort him, with much reverence, to the Bussy Gate, holding the bridle of his mare. During this journey, the goldsmith, who had taken a bag of gold, cast the pieces to the poor and needy, crying:

"Largesse! largesse to God! God bless and keep the abbot! *Vive* our good lord Hugon!"

And, on returning to his house, regaled his friends and celebrated his nuptials anew by merrymakings which lasted a full week.

Doubt not that the abbot was roundly blamed for his indulgence by his Chapter, which had its jaws open to swallow that rich prey. And so, a year

later, goodman Hugon having fallen ill, his prior told him that it was a punishment from Heaven, for that he had sacrificed the sacred interests of the Chapter and of God.

"If I have well judged that man," said the abbot, "he will remember what he owes us."

And so it proved; for, that day happening to be the anniversary of the nuptials, there came a monk to say that the goldsmith begged his benefactor to give him audience. Thereupon, he appeared in the room where the abbot was, in whose presence he uncovered two marvellously lovely shrines, which since that time no artisan hath surpassed in any spot of the Christian world, and which were called the *offering of perseverance in love*. These two treasures are, as everyone knows, placed on the high altar of the church, and are esteemed to be of inestimable workmanship, inasmuch as the goldsmith expended all his wealth upon them. Nathless, this work, far from draining his purse, filled it full to the brim, forasmuch as his renown and his profits so increased that he was able to purchase a title and vast estates, and founded the house of Anseau, which was afterward held in great honor in fair Touraine.

This teaches us to have recourse always to the saints and to God in the undertakings of life, and to persevere in all things that we know to be good; and, furthermore, that a great love triumphs over everything, the which is an old saying; but the author hath resurrected it, because it is most pleasant to the ear.

CONCERNING A PROVOST WHO DID NOT REMEMBER THINGS

In the good city of Bourges, in the days when our sire made merry there, who, afterward, laid aside the quest of pleasures to conquer the realm, and did, in fact, conquer it, there lived a provost by him commissioned to look to the public order, and who was called royal provost. Whence came, under the said king's glorious son, the office of *Prévôt de l'Hôtel*, wherein bore himself something too sternly the lord of Méré, called Tristan, of whom there hath already been mention in these Tales, although he was not of merry humor. I say this to the friends who plunder old documents, to emit a new stream and to prove wherein these Tens are learned without so seeming. So hark ye! this said provost was named Picot or Picault, whence came the words *picottin*, *picoter*, and *picorée;* by some *Pitot* or *Pitaut*, whence *pitance;* by some, as in the Langue d'Oc, Pichot, whence nothing that is worth while; by these Petiot or Petiet, as in the Langue d'Oil; by those Petitot and Petinault or Petiniaud, which was the Limousin appellation; but at Bourges he was called Petit, a name which finally became that of the family, which hath much multiplied, inasmuch

as you will find Petits everywhere; and so he will be called Petit in this adventure.

I make this etymological digression with the intent to throw light upon our language and show how the bourgeois and others acquire names.

But a truce to learning. The said provost, who had names as numerous as the provinces wherein the court sojourned, was in reality by nature a slip of a man but ill dusted by his mother, so that, when he had it in mind to laugh, he slit his cheeks as cows do to make water; which smile was called at court a provost's smile. But one day, the king, hearing this proverbial phrase uttered by several lords, said to them in jest:

"You are wrong, messieurs; Petit does not laugh, he lacks skin at the bottom of his face."

But, with his false laugh, this Petit was only the better fitted to do police duty and snap up evil-doers. In short, he was worth what he had cost. For all malice, he was something of a cuckold; for all vice, went to Vespers; for all wisdom, obeyed God when he could; for all joy, had a wife in his house; for all diversion from his joy, sought a man to hang, when he was required to produce one, nor ever failed to find one; but when he lay behind his bed-curtains, recked not of thieves. Find me in all provost Christendom a less maleficent provost! No: all provosts hang too much or too little, whereas this one hung just as much as was necessary to be provost. This good little—*petit*—provost, or this good provost Petit, has for his wife in lawful wedlock one

of the loveliest bourgeoises of Bourges, whereat he marvelled much as did all others. And so did he often, as he went to his hangings, cast at God a question which certain persons often asked in the town. To wit: why he, Petit, he, the provost, he, the royal provost, should have all to himself, Petit, provost, royal provost, a woman so well built, so perfectly furnished forth with charms, that an ass would bray with joy to see her pass. Thereto, God made no answer, and, I doubt not, had His reasons therefor. But the evil tongues of the town made answer in God's stead, that the girl was a long way from being a virgin when she became the wife of the said Petit. Others said that she was not his alone. The jesters replied that asses often enter fine stables. Everyone put forth some maxim, which made at the least a bushel of them for him who should have made it his duty to gather them up. We must needs disregard almost the four-fourths thereof, inasmuch as La Petit was a virtuous bourgeoise, who had but one lover for pleasure and her husband for duty. Find we many in the city who are so reserved of heart and lip! If you produce one, I will give you a sou or a fool—*un sol ou un fol*—as you choose. You will find some who have neither spouse nor lover. Some women have a lover and no spouse. Ugly creatures have a spouse and no lover. But, in good sooth, to find women who, having both spouse and lover, stick to the deuce without playing for the trey, there lies the miracle, I say, ye clowns, greenhorns, blockheads! So, enter

La Petit on your tablets by way of reminder, and go your way, as I resume mine.

Good Dame Petit was not of those who are always stirring, bustling about, cannot remain in one place, but fuss and fume, run hither and thither, soil themselves and have naught about them which steadies or attaches them, and are so light that they are blown about by empty flatulence as after their quintessence. No: on the contrary, La Petit was a prudent housewife, always seated in her chair, or lying in her bed ready as a chandelier, awaiting her said lover when the provost went abroad, receiving the provost when the lover took his leave. The dear woman had no thought of arraying herself in fine clothes to make other women yield to her. Nay, nay! she had found a more fitting employment for the sweet time of youth, and poured life into her joints in order to go further. Now you are well acquainted with the provost and his good wife.

The provost's lieutenant, in the labors of marriage, which are so heavy that they can be done by not less than two men, was a great lord and landowner, whom the king bitterly hated. Note this, which is an important point in this adventure. The constable, who was a stout Scottish soldier, chanced to see this Petit's wife, and desired much to see her again—some said to have her—toward morning, for long enough to tell his beads, the which is Christianly honest or honestly Christian, to the end that he might hold converse with her touching the things of science or the science of things. In all likelihood,

deeming herself very learned, the Damoiselle Petit, who was, as hath been said, an honest, virtuous, and prudent bourgeoise, would not listen to my said lord constable. After some converse, pleadings, tricks and turns, messages and messengers, the which were to no purpose, the constable swore by his great black *cocquedouille* that he would disembowel the gallant, even though he were a man of mark. But swore naught touching the lady. The which denotes a loyal Frenchman, forasmuch as under such circumstances some persons in their spleen rush upon the whole guild and kill three out of four. This monsieur le connétable pledged his great black *cocquedouille* before the king and Madame de Sorel, who were playing at cards before supper, wherewith our good sire was well content, since thus he would be delivered from that lord, who misliked him much, and that, too, without costing him a *Pater*.

"And how will you do this feat?" said Madame de Sorel, with a sly air.

"Oho! madame," replied the constable, "be sure that I have no mind to lose my great black *cocquedouille*."

Now what was in those days this great black *cocquedouille?* Ah! that point is obscure enough to ruin one's eyes in ancient tomes; yet of a surety was it a thing of much consequence. This notwithstanding, let us put on our spectacles and look. *Douille* in Bretagne means a maid and *cocque* means a cook's stove, *coquus* in the Latin lingo. From which word hath come the French word *cocquin*, a

knave who gorges, licks, trusses, fries, laps, feasts, revels, stuffs himself always, and eats everywhere; consequently can do nothing between meals, and, doing nothing, becomes poor and wicked, which leads him to steal or beg. Thence scholars might well conclude that the great *cocquedouille* was a household utensil, in the form of a stew-pan, useful to fry maids.

"Look you," continued the constable, "I will e'en bid this provost go to the country for a day and night to gather up in the fields, for the king's service, sundry peasants suspected of hatching treason with the English. Thereupon, my two turtle-doves, knowing of their man's absence, will be as happy as a soldier on leave, and if they feast together, I will unsheath the provost, sending him in the king's name to search the place where the pair may be and duly kill our friend, who lays claim to have this good *cordelier* to himself alone."

"What saith he?" asked the queen of beauty.

"A quibble," said the king, smiling.

"Let us sup," said Madame Agnes. "You are naughty knaves, who at one stroke fail in respect to honest bourgeois, ladies, and monks."

Now, worthy La Petit had long desired to have a whole night to herself, and hie her to the said lord's abode, where it was possible to shout with all one's lungs without awakening the neighbors; whereas, in the provost's house, she greatly feared a noise, and had naught but snatches of love, kisses exchanged in stealth, meagre mouthfuls, daring to

do no more than amble at the most, whereas she longed to know the roughshod gallop. Wherefore, the charming bourgeoise's Abigail hastened on the morrow, at the twelfth hour, to my lord's house, to tell him of the honest provost's departure, and bade the said lover, from whom she received many a guerdon, and whom therefor she in nowise detested, to make his preparations for the visit and the supper, for that the provost's tender bud would of a surety be beneath his roof that evening, thirsty and hungry.

"'Tis well!" said the nobleman; "say to thy mistress that I will look to it that she doth not fast in anywise."

The damned constable's pages, who were keeping watch around the house, seeing that the lover arrayed himself gallantly, and provided a goodly store of flagons and comestibles, reported to their master how everything favored the projects of his wrath. Which hearing, the good constable rubbed his hands, thinking on the blow the provost would strike. And he wrote to him, by the king's express command, to return to the town and seize at the said lord's house an English nobleman with whom he was most vehemently suspected of complicity in a plot of the blackest villainy; but, before putting into execution the said order, to come to the king's palace and take counsel touching the courtesy to be observed in said seizure. The provost, happy as a king to speak with the king, made such diligence, that he was in the town at the hour that the two lovers rang the first stroke of their vesper-bell. The lord of Cuckoldry

and the surrounding countries, who is a whimsical lord, adjusted things so well that La Petit was talking in the good old way with her beloved lord while her lord spouse talked with the king and constable, the which made him well content and his wife likewise, a rare occurrence in wedlock.

"I was saying to monseigneur," said the constable to the provost when he entered the king's chamber, "that every man throughout the realm hath right to slay his wife and her lover an he take them in the act. But our sire, who is a clement prince, contends that 'tis lawful to slay the rider only, and not his mare. Prithee tell us, good provost, what would you do, an you should find a strange lord walking in the pleasant garden which laws human and divine do grant to you alone the right to water and to sow."

"I would kill everything," said the provost; "I would crush the five hundred thousand devils of nature, flowers and seeds, the bag and the nine-pins and the bowls, the apple and the pips, the grass and the field, the woman and the man."

"You would do wrong," said the king. "That is opposed to the laws of the Church and the realm: of the realm, in that you might thus deprive me of a subject; of the Church, in that you would consign an innocent child to hell without baptism."

"Sire, I admire your profound wisdom, and well do I see that you are the centre of all justice."

"So that we can kill only the knight? *Amen*," said the constable, "kill the rider. Go in all haste to the house of the suspected lord, but look to it,

that, without allowing hay to be put on your horns, you fail not in the respect that is due to that lord."

My provost, deeming himself of a surety Chancellor of France, if he performed his mission well, hastens from the château into the town, assembles his people, arrives at the lord's house, stations his guards there, blocks with police the exits from the house, opens the door in the king's name with little noise, climbs the stairs, inquires of the servants their lord's whereabouts, places them in arrest, ascends alone, and knocks at the door of the room wherein the two lovers were fencing with the arms you know of and cries to them:

"Open! in the name of the king our sire!"

The bourgeoise recognized her husband's voice and smiled, seeing that she had not awaited the king's command to do that which hath been mentioned. But after the laughter came alarm. The lord took his cloak, wrapped himself therein, and went to the door. There, not knowing that his life was in peril, said that he was of the court and of monseigneur's household.

"Pish!" said the provost, "I have express command from monseigneur the king, and, under pain of rebellion, you are required to admit me straightway."

Thereupon, the lord came forth, closing the door.

"Whom seek you here?"

"An enemy of the king our sire, whom we command you to deliver up to us, and furthermore, you are to follow us with him to the château."

"This," thought the nobleman, "is a treacherous scheme of monsieur le connétable, whom my dear love spurned. We must find a way out of this wasps' nest."

Thereupon, turning to the provost, he played double or quits, reasoning thus with his good cuckold:

"My friend, you know that I esteem you as gallant a man as a provost can be in his office. Now, can I confide in you? I have the prettiest lady of the court in my bed within. As for the English, I have not enough of them wherewith to give Monsieur de Richmonde a breakfast, who hath sent you to my house. This is—to tell you the whole truth—the outcome of a wager between myself and my lord constable, with whom the king hath a share. They two have betted that they would know the name of my heart's lady, and I the contrary. No one hath greater hatred than I of the English, who have seized my estates in Picardie. Is't not a wicked thing to bring the law into the game against me? Oho! monsieur le connétable, a chamberlain's as good a man as you, and I will put you to shame. My dear Petit, I give you leave to search, at your good pleasure, by night and day, all the nooks and corners of my house. But enter here alone, search my room, move the bed, do therein whatever you desire. But let me cover with a sheet or kerchief the fair lady, who is clad like an archangel, to the end that you may not discover to what husband she belongs."

"That will I," said the provost. "But I am an old fox, whose tail you must not lift, and I would fain be sure that 'tis in truth a lady of the court and not an Englishman, for these same Englishmen have flesh as smooth and soft as a woman's, and well do I know it from having swung off many a one."

"So be it," said the lord; "considering the crime whereof I am basely suspected and must needs purge myself, I will e'en beseech my lady and friend to consent to lay aside her modesty for a moment; she loves me too well to refuse to save me from all reproach. Wherefore will I implore her to turn over and show you a face which will in nowise compromise her, yet will suffice you to recognize in her a noble woman, albeit 'twill be upside-down."

"'Tis well," said the provost.

The lady, having heard with her three ears, had folded her clothes and placed them beneath the pillow, doffed her chemise lest her husband might feel the texture, had swathed her head in a cloth and exposed her rounded buttocks, separated by the graceful pink line of her spine.

"Enter, my good friend," said the lord.

The provost peered up the chimney, opened the cupboard, the clothes-press, felt under the bed, the sheets, and everywhere. Then began to examine on the surface of the bed.

"Monseigneur," he said, eyeing his own lawful belongings, "I have seen young Englishmen as smooth, and, pardon me for doing my duty, I must needs see something more."

"What call you something more?" said the lord.

"Why, the other face, or, an you please, the face of the other."

"In that case, permit madame to cover herself and so adjust her coverings as to show the least possible of that which is our joy," said the lord, knowing that the bourgeoise had divers marks easy to recognize. "So turn away an instant, that my dear lady may satisfy the proprieties."

The goodwoman smiled at her lover, kissed him for his cunning, and adroitly adjusted the bedclothes, and the husband seeing plainly that which his wife would never let him see, was fully convinced that no Englishman could be thus fashioned, unless he were a luscious Englishwoman.

"Yes, my lord," he said in his lieutenant's ear, "this is in very truth a lady of the court, for our bourgeois dames are neither of such old stock nor in such good taste."

Then, the house having been searched, and no Englishman coming to light, the honest provost returned, as the constable had bade him do, to the king's château.

"Is he slain?" said the constable.

"Who?"

"He who hath planted horns on your forehead."

"I saw no one save a woman in that lord's bed, who was in the act of making merry with her."

"And thou didst see that woman plainly with thine eyes, accursed cuckold, yet didst not slay thy rival?"

"Not a woman, but a lady of the court."

"Didst see her?"

"Aye, and felt both places."

"What mean you by those words?" said the king, bursting with laughter.

"I say, saving the respect due to Your Majesty, that I verified the upper and the under side."

"Knowest thou not, I pray you, your own wife's parts, old memoryless fool? Thou dost deserve to be hanged!"

"I hold in too great reverence that of my wife's whereof you speak, ever to look at it. Moreover, she is so piously chary of her flesh that she would die rather than show a morsel of it."

"Aye," said the king, "'twas not made to be shown."

"Old *cocquedouille*, it was thy wife!" exclaimed the constable.

"Lord constable, she sleeps, poor innocent."

"Up, up I say! To horse! Let us go hence, and, if she be in thy house, I will give thee but a hundred stripes."

And the constable, followed by the provost, arrived at that functionary's house in less time than a poor woman would take to empty the poor-box. Holà! ho! Thereupon, in answer to the outcries of men threatening to raze the walls, the Abigail opened the door, yawning and stretching her arms. The constable and the provost rushed into the chamber, where with much labor they waked the bourgeoise, who feigned alarm and was sleeping so heavily that

her eyes were stuck together. Whereupon the provost triumphed greatly, saying to the said constable that he had surely been hoodwinked, that his wife was virtuous; and, in very truth, she seemed as utterly astonished as could be. The constable withdrew. The good provost undressed to go to bed forthwith, inasmuch as this adventure had brought his wife to his memory. While he doffed his harness and removed his breeches, the bourgeoise, still wondering, said to him:

"Tell me, my dear love, whence all this uproar, this monseigneur le connétable and his pages? And why come you to see if I sleep? Is it to be henceforth among the functions of the constable to see how our households—"

"I know not," said the provost, who interrupted her to tell her what had befallen him.

"And thou, without leave from me, hast looked upon a lady of the court? Ha! ha! heu! heu! hein!"

And with that she began to groan, lament, and cry aloud in such deplorable fashion, and so lustily, that the provost was abashed.

"Why, what is it, my love? what wouldst thou? what dost thou lack?"

"Alas! thou wilt love me no more after seeing how the court ladies are fashioned!"

"Hush, my love, they are great ladies. I tell thee for thine ear alone that in them everything is great."

"Dost mean it," she said, smiling, "am I better?"

"Ah!" said he, dazzled with joy, "thou art a good bit smaller."

"Then have they more joy," she sighed, "since I have so much for so little."

Whereupon the provost sought a better argument to argue with his wife, and argued with her to some purpose, since she allowed herself at last to be convinced of the great pleasure God hath placed in small things.

This shows us that nothing here below will prevail against the church of cuckolds.

OF THE MONK AMADOR, WHO WAS A FAMOUS ABBOT OF TURPENAY

On a day of drizzling rain, of the sort when the ladies remain joyously in-doors, because they love dampness and at such times see at their skirts men whom they hate not, the queen was in her chamber in the château of Amboise, behind the curtains of the window. There, seated in a chair, she worked upon tapestry for diversion, but plied her needle heedlessly, gazed much at the rain falling into the Loire, spake no word, but was pensive, and her ladies did in imitation of her. The good king conversed with those of his courtiers who had attended him from chapel, for he had but just returned from the dominical Vespers. His quips, cranks, and discussions at an end, he approached, saw that she was absorbed, saw that the ladies were absorbed likewise, and took note of the fact that they were all acquainted with the things of marriage.

"Tell me," he said, "saw I not the good abbot of Turpenay here but now?"

Which hearing, there came toward the king the monk who, by his appeals for justice, was formerly so obnoxious to King Louis the Eleventh, that the said king had in all seriousness ordered his *prévôt*

de l'hôtel to remove him from his sight; and in the tale concerning that king in the first Ten, hath been told how the monk was saved through the error of Sieur Tristan. This monk was then a man whose qualities had grown abundantly in density, so much so that his wit was manifest in the high coloring of his face. Therefore was he most agreeable to the ladies, who gorged him with wines, sweetmeats, and choice dishes at the dinners, suppers, and merrymakings to which they bade him, forasmuch as every host loves these joyous guests of God, with clean jowls, whose words are as many as the mouthfuls they eat. The said abbot was a mischievous gossip, who under the frock regaled the ladies with many jovial tales whereat they took offence only after hearing them, forasmuch as one must needs hear things in order to judge them.

"Reverend father," said the king, "this is the twilight hour when female ears may be regaled with some diverting adventure, in that the ladies laugh without blushing, or blush while they laugh, at their pleasure. Tell us a merry tale, a monk's tale say I. Right gladly will I listen to it, by my faith, for I would fain be diverted and the ladies likewise."

"We submit, in order to please Your Seigniory," said the queen, "for our lord abbot goes something too far."

"In that case," said the king, turning to the monk, "read us some Christian admonition, my father, to divert madame."

"Sire, my sight is weak and the light is failing."

"Then tell us a story that halts at the waist."

"Ah! sire," said the monk, smiling, "that which I have in mind halts there, but starts at the feet."

The nobles present remonstrated and implored the queen and her ladies so courteously, that, like the good Bretonne she was, she bestowed a gracious smile upon the monk.

"Act your pleasure, my father," she said; "you will be answerable for our sins to God."

"Assuredly, madame; if it be your good pleasure to take mine, you will be the gainer thereby."

All laughed, the queen with the rest. The king sat beside his dear wife, whom he loved dearly, as everyone knows. Then the courtiers received permission to sit, the old nobles, be it understood; for the younger ones, with the ladies' leave, sat on the edges of their chairs, the better to laugh silently in company. Thereupon did the abbot of Turpenay smilingly set forth the following Tale, the salacious passages whereof he glided gently over in a voice like the note of a flute.

About a hundred years since, at the least, there arose great disputes in Christendom, for the reason that two popes were face to face at Rome, each claiming to have been lawfully chosen, to the great prejudice of convents, abbeys, and episcopal sees, forasmuch as each of the two popes, in order to be recognized by the greater number, granted privileges to his adherents, the which caused double incumbencies

everywhere. At that juncture, the monasteries or abbeys which were in litigation with their neighbors could not recognize both popes, and found themselves much impeded by the other, who gave judgment to the opponents of the Chapter. This wicked schism engendered an infinitude of evils, and proves besides that there is no more maleficent pest in Christendom than the Church's adultery.

At this time, then, when the devil was raging against our poor possessions, the most glorious abbey of Turpenay, whereof I am at this hour the unworthy head, had a great lawsuit anent certain rights of property with the redoubtable Sieur de Candé, an idolatrous, heretical, forsworn knave and wicked nobleman. This devil come to earth in the guise of a noble, was, in good sooth, a gallant soldier, in high favor at court, and a friend of Sieur Bureau de la Rivière, who was a servitor most dear to the heart of King Charles the Fifth of glorious memory. Under the shadow of the favor of this Sieur de la Rivière, my said Sieur de Candé took license to do whatever pleased his fancy, without fear of chastisement, in the poor valley of the Indre, where he was wont to deem everything his own from Montbazon to Ussé. Be sure that his neighbors stood in deadly fear of him, and, in order to be left upon the earth, allowed him to do his pleasure, but would have loved him better under ground than on it, and wished him innumerable ills, whereof he recked not at all. In the whole valley, the noble abbey alone held firm against this devil, forasmuch

as the Church hath always held to the doctrine of gathering into its fold the weak and helpless, and striving to defend the oppressed, more especially when its rights and privileges are threatened. Therefore did this hard fighter grievously hate the monks, and, above all, them of Turpenay, who would not allow their rights to be stolen from them by force or craft or otherwise.

Doubt not that he was well pleased by the ecclesiastical schism, and awaited an abbey's choice in the matter of the two popes, to pillage it, being prepared to recognize that one to whom the abbot of Turpenay refused his obedience. After his return to his château, he was wont to vex and torment the priests he chanced to meet on his domains, in such-wise that a poor monk, surprised by the said lord on the path which goes by the river-bank through his domain, could devise no other means of safety than to throw himself into the stream, where, by a special miracle of God, to whom the goodman prayed most fervently, his gown upbore him, and he sailed safely to the other shore, which he reached in full sight of Sieur de Candé, who was in nowise ashamed to make merry over the great fright of one of God's servants. See in what stuff this accursed pilgrim was clad.

The abbot to whose care our glorious abbey was then entrusted led a most saintlike life, prayed God devoutly, but could have saved his soul ten times, of such good metal was his religion, before saving the abbey from the claws of that infernal knave. Albeit

the old abbot was sore perplexed and saw the evil hour drawing nigh, he trusted in God for future aid, saying that he would not allow the possessions of his Church to be laid hands upon; again, that he who had raised up the Princess Judith for the Egyptians and Queen Lucretia for the Romans would grant succor to his most illustrious abbey of Turpenay, and other most sapient sayings. But his monks, who—to our shame I must confess it—were recreant knaves, reproved him for his indifference, and said, on the contrary, that it was full time to harness all the cattle in the province to the chariot of Providence to the end that it might arrive in due season; that the trumpets of Jericho were no longer manufactured in any place on earth; and that God had had so much vexation of spirit because of His creation, that He no longer paid any heed thereto; in short, a thousand and one worldly sentiments which were in truth so many doubts and slanders against God.

At this deplorable conjuncture, there arose a strange commotion in the mind of a monk named Amador. This said name had been conferred on him in mockery, because his person presented a true portrait of the false god Egipan. Like him, he had a famous belly, like him, bandy legs, stout arms as hairy as a saddler's, a back made to carry a wallet, a face as red as a drunkard's nose, bright eyes, beard unkempt, bald head, and withal was so swollen with pork and good cheer that you would have thought him with child. Doubt not that he said Matins on the steps of the cellar and sang Vespers in the

vineyard of the Lord. Most of the time he lay on his back like a beggar with sores, and he strayed through the valley, fuddling, gossiping, blessing bridals, shaking grapes from the vines and watching the maids taste, despite the prohibitions of the lord abbot. In short, he was a thief, a sluggard, and an unworthy soldier of the ecclesiastical army, for whom no one in the abbey cared a fig, and who was left in idleness from Christian charity, because he was deemed to be mad.

Amador, knowing that there was danger of the destruction of the abbey wherein he wallowed happily like a wild boar in its lair, dressed his hair, went hither and thither, visited each cell, listened in the refectory, smacked his lips, and said that he flattered himself that he could save the abbey. He studied the points in controversy, obtained leave from the lord abbot to adjust the matter, and was promised by the whole Chapter the vacancy in the sub-priorship if he should end the litigation. Then he went forth into the fields, heedless of the cruelties and evil deeds of Sieur de Candé, saying that he carried in his gown the wherewithal to reduce him to submission.

Amador went forth on foot, with his gown for all viaticum, but be sure that it was greasy enough to feed a Minim. He chose for his journey to the château a day when there fell water enough to fill all of the housewives' tubs, and came, without meeting any person, in sight of Candé, wet as a drowned dog; he bravely entered the courtyard,

took shelter under a roof to wait until the fury of the storm should be allayed, and stationed himself without fear before the hall wherein Sieur de Candé was like to be. A servant, espying him as he came forth from supper, had pity on him, bade him go hence, else would the lord give him a hundred strokes of the lash for a beginning, and asked him what made him so bold as to dare enter a house where monks were as bitterly detested as the red leprosy.

"Alas!" said Amador, "I am journeying to Tours, sent thither by my lord abbot. An my lord of Candé were not so cruel to God's poor servants, in such a flood I should be in his house, not in his courtyard. I pray that he may find mercy in his last hour."

The servant carried these words to Sieur de Candé, who, at the first blush, would cast the monk into the great drain of the château, amid the filth, as a filthy thing. But Madame de Candé, who had much authority over her lord and husband and was much feared of him for that he hoped to inherit great wealth from her, and that she showed herself a petty tyrant, reproved him, saying that it was possible that the said monk was a Christian; that in such a deluge thieves would give shelter to an officer of the law; moreover, that they should treat him well so that they might learn the decision of the monks of Turpenay touching the schism, and that her counsel was to put an end by gentleness and not by force to the difficulties between the abbey and the domain of Candé, for that no noble since Christ's coming had been stronger than the Church, and that sooner or later the abbey

would ruin the château; in fine, she put forth a thousand wise arguments, such as women employ in the great storms of life, when they are overwearied thereby.

Amador had such a piteous countenance, his aspect was so mean and so inviting of banter, that the châtelain, depressed by the rain, conceived the idea of making merry with him, tormenting him, rinsing his glass in vinegar, and giving him good cause to remember his welcome at the château. Thereupon, the said lord, who had secret commerce with his wife's tire-woman, bade this damsel, by name Perrotte, aid him in carrying out his evil designs upon poor Amador. When measures were concerted between them, the buxom wench, who hated monks to please her master, went to the said monk, who was under the pig-sty, and feigned an affable demeanor, in order to deceive him entirely.

"My father," said she, "the lord of this château takes shame to himself for having left in the rain one of God's servants, when there was room in his hall, a good fire on the hearth, and the table laid. In his name and that of the lady of the château, I bid you enter."

"I thank the lord and lady, not for their hospitality, which is a Christian thing, but for sending as envoy to me, a poor sinner, an angel endowed with charms so great that methinks I see the Virgin of our altar."

While speaking, Amador raised his head and burned the pretty tire-woman with two tongues of

flame that darted from his blazing eyes, so that she found him not so ugly, nor so filthy, nor so bestial.

As he mounted the steps with Perrotte, Amador received across the nose, cheek, and other portions of his face a lash that caused him to see all the tapers of the *Magnificat*, so lustily was it applied to the monk by the Sieur de Candé, who was chastising his greyhounds and feigned not to see the monk. He implored Amador to pardon him for the blow, and pursued his dogs, who had caused his guest to fall. The laughing tire-woman, who was in the plot, had acquitted herself adroitly.

Observing this intelligence, Amador suspected the commerce between the chevalier and Perrotte and Perrotte and the chevalier, concerning whom it was possible that the wenches in the valley had whispered something to him at the washing-stones. Of those persons who were then in the hall not one made room for the man of God, who was left standing in the draughts from the door and window, where he shivered with cold until the moment when the Sieur de Candé, madame his wife, and his old sister Mademoiselle de Candé, who was governess to the young heiress of the house, then about sixteen years of age, entered and took their seats at the top of the table, far from the retainers, according to the ancient custom, wherefrom the noble lords of the present day depart, most wrongfully. Monsieur de Candé, heedless of the monk's presence, allowed him to be placed at the lowest end of the table, in a corner where two mischievous knaves had it in

charge to crowd him pitilessly. And the said youths did, in good sooth, torment his feet, his body, his arms, like veritable inquisitioners, filled his goblet with white wine in place of water to confuse his understanding and make sport of him the better; but they gave him seven full jugs without his hiccoughing or breaking wind or water, the which did much alarm them, since his eye remained clear as a mirror. Nathless, supported by a glance from their lord, they pursued their course, threw sauces in his beard, while feigning to do him reverence, and wiped them away for the sole purpose of violently pulling the said beard. The scullion, too, serving a caudle, baptized his head therewith, taking care to make the scalding mixture trickle down poor Amador's backbone, who endured this torture sweetly, for the spirit of God was in him, and also, doubt it not, the hope of ending the litigation by holding his ground within the château.

This notwithstanding, the malevolent crew laughed so loud and mockingly at the greasy baptism given by the scullion to the guzzling monk, whose funnel the butler said that he tried thus to close up, that Madame de Candé could not but see what things were being done at the bottom of the board. Then did the châtelaine espy Amador, who, with a look of perfect resignation, wiped his face and hoped to take advantage of the great beef-bones which had been placed upon his pewter plate. At that moment, the good monk, who had dexterously driven his knife into a huge bone, took it in his two hairy hands,

broke it clean, sucked the warm marrow and found it to his taste.

"Faith," said Madame de Candé to herself, "God hath given His strength to this monk."

So thinking, she sternly bade the pages, retainers, and others to cease tormenting the monk, whom they served in sport with many bruised apples and wormy nuts. He, seeing that the old spinster and her pupil, the lady and her tire-women, had seen him handling the bone, turned up his sleeve, showed them the triple muscles of his arm, placed the nuts where the veins fork near the wrist, and crushed them one by one, dealing them so stout a blow with the palm of his hand, that they seemed to be no more than ripe medlars. Then did he crunch them between his teeth, white as a dog's, husk, shell, fruit, and all, whereof he made in less than a twinkling a pulp which he swallowed like hydromel. When he had naught before him save apples, he divided them between two fingers, which he used like scissors to cut them cleanly, without boggling. Be sure that the women held their peace, that the servants believed that the devil was in the monk, and that, but for his wife and the dense darkness of the night, my lord of Candé would have put him out-of-doors, in great fear of God. Already everyone said to himself that the monk was of a temper to hurl the château into the drain. And so, when everyone had wiped his lips, Monsieur de Candé failed not to imprison this devil whose strength was terrible to see, and caused him to be

taken to the vile den where Perrotte had arranged her machinery to torment him during the night.

All the tom-cats of the manor had been summoned to make confession to him, being incited to tell him their sins by the herb which arouses their passions; likewise the swine, for whom heaping dishes of chitterlings had been placed under the bed, with intent to prevent them from making themselves monks, the which they were much inclined to do, by disgusting them by means of the *Libera* which the monk sang to them. Moreover, at every movement of poor Amador, who found bits of horse-hair in his sheets, he caused ice-cold water to fall into his bed, and a thousand other annoying tricks wherein wags are wont to indulge in châteaux.

Now, everyone had gone to bed, awaiting the witch's dance of the monk, well assured that they would not fail to hear it, inasmuch as the said monk had been lodged under the eaves at the top of a turret, whereof the lower door was carefully entrusted to the care of the dogs, who howled hungrily for the said monk. Designing to hear in what language the interview of the monk with the cats and pigs would be held, the lord went to bed to his sweetheart La Perrotte, whose room was near at hand.

When he found himself thus entertained, honest Amador took from his wallet a knife and dexterously unbolted his door. Then he opened his ears to learn what was doing in the château, and heard the lord thereof glide, laughing, into his maid-servant's

room. Suspecting their illicit commerce, he awaited the moment when the lady of the manor should be alone between her sheets, then betook himself to her chamber, barefooted, that his sandals might not share his secrets. Then appeared he before her, by lamplight, after the manner of monks at night, the which is a marvellous condition, difficult to maintain for long in the case of a layman, inasmuch as it is an effect of the gown which magnifies everything. And, having allowed her to see that he was in very truth a monk, addressed her gently in this language:

"Hark ye, madame, whom may God preserve! know that I am sent hither by Jesus and the Virgin Mary to warn you to put an end to the revolting villainy that is taking place, to the prejudice of your virtue, which is treacherously deprived of the best thing which your husband hath, wherewith he doth regale your tire-woman. What boots it to be a lady, if the seignorial dues are paid elsewhere? By this reckoning, your tire-woman is the lady, and you the tire-woman. Are not all the pleasures enjoyed by that tire-woman due to you? Even so will you find them heaped up in our Church, which is the consolation of the afflicted. Behold in me the messenger ready to pay these debts if you renounce not your claim to them."

So speaking, the monk slightly loosened his girdle, wherein he was much incommoded, so touched he seemed to see the beautiful things the which my lord of Candé disdained.

"If you say true, my father, then will I place myself under your guidance," she said, leaping lightly from the bed. "You are of a surety a messenger from God, forasmuch as you have seen in one day that which I have not seen herein in a long time."

Thereupon, she went forth from her chamber in company with the said monk, whose most sacred gown she failed not to rub gently, and was so smitten when she found it genuine, that she desired to find her husband at fault. And, in truth, she heard him talking of the monk in her tire-woman's bed. Convinced of their sin, she fell into a furious rage and opened her mouth to resolve it into words, the which is a fashion peculiar to women, and would have raised the very devil before giving the girl over to the law. But Amador said to her that it was the better way first to be revenged and to make outcry after.

"Avenge me, then, speedily, my father," said she, "so that I may cry out."

Whereupon the monk avenged her most monastically with a good, stout vengeance, the which she enjoyed to the full, like a drunkard who puts his lips to the bung-hole of a cask, for, when a lady doth revenge herself, she should make herself drunk with vengeance or not taste it. And the châtelaine was so avenged that she could not stir, inasmuch as nothing overexcites one, makes one gasp for breath, and exhausts one, like wrath and vengeance. But, although she was avenged, revenged, and multi-avenged, yet would she not forgive, to the end that

she might retain the right to avenge herself, now here, now there, with the monk.

Observing this thirst for vengeance, Amador promised to aid her to avenge herself so long as her ire endured, for he confessed to her that, in his capacity of a monk constrained to meditate upon the things of nature, he knew an infinite number of manners, methods, and fashions of wreaking vengeance. Likewise he taught her canonically how Christian a thing revenge is, inasmuch as, throughout the Holy Scriptures, God hath vaunted Himself above all other qualities upon being an avenging God, and, furthermore, hath proved to us, in the matter of hell, how royally divine a thing vengeance is, since His vengeance is everlasting. Whence it followed that women and monks should avenge themselves, under pain of being held no Christians and unfaithful servitors of the divine doctrines. This dogma was infinitely agreeable to the lady, who confessed that she had never before understood the commandments of the Church, and requested the well-beloved monk to instruct her therein from the beginning.

Then did the châtelaine, whose vital spirits were deeply stirred as a result of this vengeance, which had much refreshed them, go to the room where the wench was making merry, whom by chance she found with her hand where the good châtelaine often had her eye, as the merchants have upon their wares, to the end that they be not stolen. They were, according to the saying of President

Lizet when he was in a merry mood, a couple taken in the act in bed, and sheepish they were and ashamed and abashed. The sight was more offensive to the lady than one can say, the which was apparent in her discourse, wherein was more bitterness than in the water of her great pond, when the flood-gates were thrown open. It was a sermon in three heads, accompanied by high-pitched music, scattered among all the various keys, with many sharps among the notes.

"A fig for virtue, my lord! I have had full enough of it. You will prove to me that religion in conjugal faith is an absurdity. So this is the reason why I have no sons. How many children have you put in this common oven, in this Church poor-box, in this bottomless sack, in this leprous bowl, the true graveyard of the house of Candé? I do not choose to know whether I am barren by nature or through your fault. I will leave you your tire-woman. For my part, I will take pretty cavaliers, to the end that we may have an heir. You will make bastards and I lawful heirs."

"My love," said the discomfited lord, "cry not so loud."

"Marry!" replied the lady, "'tis my will to cry, and cry I will in suchwise as to be plainly heard, heard by the archbishop, heard by the legate, by the king, by my brothers, who will all avenge me for this infamy."

"Do not dishonor your husband."

"Prithee, is this dishonor? You are right. But,

my lord, it cannot come from you, but from this strumpet, whom I will straightway have sewn in a sack and cast into the Indre; thus will your dishonor be washed away.—Ho there!" she cried.

"Hush, madame," said her lord, as shamefaced as a blind man's dog, for this great warrior, so ready to murder others, was like a child under his lady's eyes; as is wont to be the case with soldiers, forasmuch as in them strength lieth fallow, and the dense carnal instincts of matter are found, whereas, on the contrary, there is in woman a subtle wit and a ray of the perfumed flame that enlightens paradise, the which causeth men to marvel greatly. This is the reason why some women lead their husbands by the nose, inasmuch as wit is king of matter.

(Thereat the ladies began to laugh, and the king likewise.)

"I will not hold my peace," said Madame de Candé,—said the abbot, resuming his tale,—"I am too bitterly outraged; so this is the recompense of my great wealth, of my virtuous conduct! Have I ever refused to obey you, even in Lent and on fast-days? Am I cold enough to freeze the sun? think you that I do things by force, duty, or pure complaisance? Have I a blessed maze? am I a consecrated shrine? Was there need of a papal brief to enter? God's virtue! are you so wonted to it, that you are weary of it? Have I not done all things to your liking? Do tire-women know more than ladies? Ah! I doubt not that is true, since she hath allowed you to plough her field without sowing it. Teach me that trade;

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right willingly will I practise it with them whom I shall take for my service; for mark what I say, I am free. That is well. Your company was overladen with *ennui*, and you sold me a paltry morsel of pleasure at too high a price. Thank God! I am quit of you and your caprices, so that I may withdraw to a convent of monks—*religieux*—"

Her intent was to say nuns,—*religieuses*,—but that avenging monk had bedevilled her tongue.

"—And I shall be happier with my daughter in that convent than in this abode of abominable wickedness. You may inherit from your servant. Ha! ha! a fine lady of Candé she!"

"What hath taken place in this house?" said Amador, who suddenly appeared.

"It hath taken place, my father," she made answer, "that here is one who crieth aloud for vengeance. And, first of all, will I cause this harlot to be cast into the river, sewn in a sack, for having disturbed the seed of the house of Candé to her advantage; thus shall I save the headsman a task. For the rest, it is my purpose—"

"Lay aside your wrath, my daughter," said the monk. "We are commanded by the Church, in the *paternoster*, to forgive the sins of others toward ourselves, an we aspire to heaven, forasmuch as God forgiveth them who have thus forgiven others. God doth avenge Himself eternally on none save the wicked who have avenged themselves, but retaineth in His paradise them who have forgiven. Thence cometh the jubilee, which is a day of great

rejoicing, for that all debts and offences are remitted. Thus is it a blessed thing to forgive. Forgive, forgive! forgiveness is a blessed thing. Forgive Monseigneur de Candé, who will bless you for your gracious compassion and will love you much henceforth. This forgiveness will restore to you the flowers of youth. And doubt not, my dear and fair young lady, that forgiveness is many times a manner of avenging one's self. Forgive your tirewoman, who will pray God for you. And so God, being implored by all, will have you in His keeping and will grant you a gallant lineage of sons for this forgiveness."

Having spoken, the monk took the lord's hand and placed it in his lady's, adding:

"Go, now, and converse touching this forgiveness."

Then did he whisper in the lord's ear these wise words:

"Monseigneur, draw your great argument, and you will put her to silence by urging it upon her, for a woman's mouth is full of words only when she is otherwise empty. Argue, therefore, and thus will you always prevail over the woman."

"By the body of God! there is some good in this monk!" said the lord to himself as he retired.

When Amador found himself alone with La Perrotte, he thus discoursed to her:

"You are in fault, my dear, for having sought to do murder upon a poor servant of God; therefore are you in peril of the outburst of divine wrath,

which will fall upon you; whithersoever you may go, it will follow you always and lay hold of you in all your joints, even after your death, and will cook you like pasties in the oven of hell, where you will bake for all eternity, and will receive each day seven hundred thousand million lashes for that which I received through your connivance."

"Ah! my father," cried the tire-woman, throwing herself at the monk's feet, "you alone can save me, for, were I to don your holy gown, I should be sheltered from the wrath of God."

As she spake, she raised the gown as if to crawl within it, and cried out:

"By my soul! monks are more beautiful than cavaliers."

"By the devil's fork! hast thou never seen nor felt a monk?"

"No," said the wench.

"And thou hast no knowledge of the service which monks chant without speaking?"

"No," said Perrotte.

Then did the monk show it to her in the good old way, as performed at the festivals *à doubles bâtons*, with the great chiming of bells in use in the great monasteries, psalms fervently sung in *F major*, flaming tapers and choirboys, and explained to her the *Introit*, likewise the *Ite missa est*, forasmuch as he went away, leaving her so sanctified that the wrath of God could have found no part of the wench that was not most amply monasticized.

By his command, Perrotte led him to the chamber

wherein lay the Damoiselle de Candé, sister of the châtelain, to whom he appeared to inquire if it were her good pleasure to confess to him, for the reason that monks came but rarely to the château. The spinster was well content, as every good Christian woman would have been, to cleanse her conscience. Amador required her to lay bare her conscience to him, and the poor damoiselle, having allowed him to see that which the monk declared to be the conscience of a maid, he found it very black, and said to her that all the sins of women were perfected there; and that, to be sinless in the future, she must needs stopper her conscience with a monk's indulgence. To which the honest, unlearned damoiselle replied that she knew not where such indulgences might be obtained, and the monk said to her that he carried about with him a very treasure of indulgence, forasmuch as nothing in this world was more indulgent, since it spake not and produced infinite joys, the which is the true, the prime, and everlasting quality of indulgence. The poor damoiselle's eyes were so dazzled by that treasure, whereof she was in complete and utter ignorance, that her brain was all bewildered, and she chose to believe so heartily in the monk's relic that she indulged religiously in indulgences even as the lady of Candé had indulged in vengeances.

This confession awoke the little maid of Candé, who came to look. Observe that the monk had hoped for that meeting, since the water had come to his mouth at the sight of that luscious fruit,

which he straightway gobbled, forasmuch as the good spinster could not refuse that he should bestow upon the little maid, who wanted it, his remnant of indulgences. Doubt not, however, that that joy was due him for his labors.

The morning having come, the pigs having eaten their chitterlings, the cats having cooled toward one another, by dint of watering the places rubbed with the herb, Amador went to repose in his bed, wherefrom La Perrotte had removed all her machinery of annoyance. One and all, by the monk's favor, slept so long a time, that no one in the château rose before mid-day, which was the hour of dinner. The servants all believed the monk to be a devil who had carried off the cats, the pigs, and the masters likewise. Notwithstanding these conjectures, all were in the banquet-hall for the mid-day repast.

"Come, my father," said the châtelaine, taking the arm of the monk, whom she placed by her side in the baron's chair, to the great stupor of all the retainers, for the lord of Candé spake not a word.

"Page, give Père Amador some of this," said madame.

"Père Amador hath need of this," said the good Damoiselle de Candé.

"Fill Père Amador's goblet," said the lord.

"Père Amador wants some bread," said the little maid of Candé.

"What do you wish, Père Amador?" said La Perrotte.

At every moment, it was Amador here and Amador there. Honest Amador was fêted like a virgin's treasure on a wedding-night.

"Eat, my father," said the lady, "for you had but meagre cheer last night."

"Drink, my father," said the lord; "by God's blood, you are the most gallant monk that I have ever seen."

"Père Amador is a handsome monk," said La Perrotte.

"An indulgent monk," said the spinster.

"A beneficent monk," said the little maid of Candé.

"A great monk," said the lady.

"A monk who hath a name that fits him well," said the clerk of the château.

Amador feasted and refeasted, revelled among the dishes, guzzled hippocras, licked his chops, belched, puffed himself out, strutted and stamped like a bull in his field. The others gazed at him in great fear, believing that he was a magician.

The dinner at an end, Madame de Candé, the Damoiselle de Candé, and the little maid of Candé besought the lord of Candé, with much coaxing discourse, to put an end to the lawsuit. Much was said to him thereon by madame, who pointed out to him how useful a person was a monk in a château; by mademoiselle, who was desirous thenceforth to have her conscience furbished every day; by the little maid, who pulled her father's beard and asked him that the monk might be allowed to

dwell at Candé. If ever a dispute were adjusted, it would be by the monk; the monk was of sound understanding, very gentle, and virtuous as a saint; it was a great misfortune to be on ill terms with a convent wherein were such monks; if all monks were like him, the abbey would always and in all places prevail over the château and destroy it, for that the monk was a man of might; in fine, they put forth a thousand reasons, which were like a deluge of words, and fell in such brisk showers that the lord yielded, seeing that there would be no peace therein until the affair should be adjusted to suit the wishes of his womankind. Thereupon, he summoned the clerk who wrote for him, likewise the monk. Then did Amador surprise him beyond measure by showing him the deeds and letters, which prevented the lord and his clerk from postponing the adjustment.

When the lady of Candé saw that they were in a fair way to end the suit, she went to her linen cupboard to fetch a piece of fine cloth wherewith to make a new gown for dear Amador. All in the house had seen how sadly worn was the monk's gown, and it would have been great pity to leave so noble an instrument of vengeance in so wretched a sack. Then did they all vie with one another in making the gown. Madame de Candé cut it, the tire-woman made the hood, Mademoiselle de Candé must needs stitch it, and the little maid took the sleeves. And one and all strove to make it perfect, with so ardent a desire to see the monk in fine

array, that his gown was ready at the hour of supper, as was the deed of adjustment, drawn up and sealed by Monsieur de Candé.

"Now, my father," said the lady, "if you love us, you will rest from this great labor by steaming yourself in a bath which I have caused Perrotte to heat."

So Amador was bathed in perfumed water. When he came forth found he his new gown of fine linen and beautiful sandals, the which displayed him to the eyes of all as the most glorious monk in all the world.

Meanwhile, the monks of Turpenay, in great fear for Amador, had sent two monks to spy about the château. These spies were prowling about the drains just as Perrotte threw therein Amador's greasy old gown, together with much rubbish; seeing which they believed that it was all over with the poor fool. So they returned, saying that of a surety Amador had suffered cruel martyrdom for the abbey. Which learning, the abbot summoned all the monks to the chapel to pray God that he would succor his devoted servant in his torments.

The monk, having supped, thrust his deed in his girdle and would fain return to Turpenay. Thereupon, he found at the foot of the steps madame's palfrey, saddled and bridled, held in readiness for him by her esquire; moreover, the lord had ordered his men-at-arms to attend the good monk, that no harm might befall him. The which seeing, Amador forgave the evil deeds of the preceding day and

bestowed his blessing on all before going forth from that converted place. Doubt not that he was followed with her eyes by madame, who proclaimed him a good rider. Perrotte declared that for a monk he held himself straighter on horseback than any of the men-at-arms. Mademoiselle de Candé sighed. The little maid would fain have him for her confessor.

"He hath sanctified the château," said they all when they were within doors.

When Amador's escort appeared at the gateway of the abbey, there was terrible alarm, for the keeper of the gate thought that the lord of Candé, having had his appetite for monks sharpened by the death of poor Amador, had it in mind to sack the abbey of Turpenay. But Amador called to him in his loud, hoarse voice, was recognized, was led into the courtyard, and, when he dismounted from madame's palfrey, there was an outburst which terrified the monks like a red moon. So they uttered loud shouts in the refectory and came one and all to felicitate Amador, who waved the deed over his head. The men-at-arms were regaled with the best wine in the cellar, which was a present made to them of Turpenay by them of Marmoustiers, to whom belonged the vineyards of Vouvray. The honest abbot, having caused the writing of the lord of Candé to be read to him, went within, saying:

"In these divers occurrences may be plainly seen the finger of God, to whom we must straightway return thanks."

As the good abbot recurred always to the finger of God, while thanking Amador, the monk was displeased to see his trusty instrument thus cried down, and said to him:

"Suppose that it was His arm, my father, and let us speak no more of it."

The termination of the lawsuit between the lord of Candé and the abbey of Turpenay was followed by a good-fortune which made the said lord most devoted to our Church; for he had a son at the end of the ninth month. Two years thereafter, Amador was chosen abbot by the monks, who looked forward to a merry season with a fool to govern them. But Amador, having become an abbot, became virtuous and very austere, for the reason that he had overcome his evil desires by his pious exercises and had recast his nature at the female forge, wherein is a fire to clarify everything, inasmuch as the said fire is the most perpetual, persevering, persistent, perfect, permanent, perdurable, and perennial fire on earth. In truth, it is a fire to destroy everything, and which so completely destroyed what was evil in Amador, that it left there naught save that which it could not consume, to wit: his wit, the which was clear as a diamond, which is, as all know, a remnant of the great fire whereby our globe was carbonized long ago. Thus was Amador the instrument chosen by Providence to reform our illustrious abbey; for he brought order into all things there, watched night and day over his monks, made them all rise at the hours appointed for the offices, counted them in

the chapel, as a shepherd counts his lambs, held them in leash and punished faults so sternly that he made of them all most virtuous monks.

This teaches us to give ourselves to woman rather with a view to our own chastisement than to derive pleasure therefrom. Moreover, this adventure teaches us that we should never contend with churchmen.

The king and queen found this tale most highly spiced, the courtiers avowed that they had never heard one more diverting, and all the ladies would gladly have been concerned in it.

BERTHE THE PENITENT

I

HOW BERTHE REMAINED A VIRGIN IN WEDLOCK

About the time of the first flight of Monseigneur le Dauphin, whereby our good Sire Charles the Victorious was deeply grieved, there occurred a mishap in a noble family of Touraine, since altogether extinct; and for that reason the very deplorable story may now be told. May the author be aided in this task by the holy Confessors, the Martyrs, and other celestial Powers, who, by the command of the Lord God, were they who brought good out of this adventure.

From a defect in his nature, Sieur Imbert de Bastarnay, one of the greatest landed proprietors of our province of Touraine, placed no trust in the intellect of the female of man, whom he deemed to be too restless, by reason of her contortions; and it may well be that he was right. In this wrongful idea, therefore, did he live without a helpmeet, the which was in nowise to his advantage. Being always alone, this good man knew naught of the art of

making himself agreeable to others, having never been abroad save for warlike excursions and revels of bachelors, with whom he was not embarrassed. So did he remain filthy in his clothes, sweating in his harness, had black hands and an ape-like face, and, in a word, seemed the vilest creature in all Christendom as to his outward person, albeit, as to his heart, his brain, and other hidden things, he had qualities which made him most desirable. A messenger from God—mark this—would have journeyed far without finding a warrior more staunch at his post, a nobleman of more spotless honor, fewer words, and more perfect loyalty.

Some said, from having heard him, that he was wise in his words and a most profitable counsellor. Was it not with design that God, who loves to make sport of us, planted so many perfections in a man so wretchedly apparelled? This said lord, having made himself a sexagenarian to all intent, although he was but fifty years of age, determined to take to himself a wife, to the end that he might have heirs. Thereupon, as he looked about for the place where he could find a mould adapted to his needs, he heard extolled the great merits and perfections of a maiden of the illustrious family of Rohan, which then held fiefs in that province, which maiden was called Berthe by her baptismal name. Imbert, having gone to see her at the château of Montbazon, was, by reason of the charms and guileless virtue of the said Berthe de Rohan, assailed with so great a desire to enjoy her that he determined to take her for his

wife, thinking that a maiden of such high lineage could never fail in her duty.

This marriage was soon arranged, forasmuch as the said Sire de Rohan had seven daughters and knew not how to establish them all, at a time when everyone was making war and rehabilitating his impaired fortunes. Happily, goodman Bastarnay found that Berthe was, in truth, a virgin, the which bore witness to her good upbringing and to due maternal chastisement. And so, on the very night when it was lawful for him to embrace her, he got her with child so manfully, that he had sufficient proof thereof at the end of the second month of wedlock, whereat Sire Imbert was most joyful. To have done with this first phase of the adventure, let us say here that from that lawful seed was born the Sire de Bastarnay, who was made duke by the favor of King Louis the Eleventh, also his chamberlain, also his ambassador in divers countries of Europe, and much beloved by that most redoubted lord, whom he never failed. This loyalty was an inheritance from his father, who had in early youth become attached to Monseigneur le Dauphin, all whose fortunes he followed, even his rebellions, for he was so attached to him that he would have sent Christ to the Cross, had he been called upon by him so to do; a flower of friendship most rare about princes and great men.

At first, the fair Madame de Bastarnay bore herself so loyally that her companion felt speedily vanish the dense vapors and black clouds that befouled the

brilliant rays of female glory in the goodman's mind. And, following the custom of unbelievers, he passed from mistrust to trust so heartily that he abandoned the government of his household to the said Berthe, made her the mistress of his acts and movements, sovereign of all things, queen of his honor, guardian of his white hairs, and would have slain without parley whoever should have said to him an evil word touching that mirror of virtue, in whom had been no other breath save that which issued from his conjugal and marital lips, albeit they were cold and withered.

To be in all respects truthful, it must be said that at that season the little fellow aided him much, for with him the pretty mother busied herself night and day during six years, and first of all fed him with her own milk and made of him a true lover's lieutenant, abandoning to him her dainty breasts, whereat he bit stoutly, to his heart's content, and was always like a lover. That virtuous mother knew no other caresses than those of his red lips, had no other endearments than those of his sweet little hands which ran over her like a scampering mouse's paws, read in no other book than his bright little eyes wherein the blue sky was mirrored, heard no other music than that of his cries which entered her ear like the words of an angel. Be sure that she was always fondling him, longed to kiss him early in the morning, kissed him at evening, and, it was said, would rise in the night to devour him with sweet caresses, made herself small even as he was small, reared him

with perfect maternal devotion,—in fine, bore herself as the best and happiest mother in the world, without disrespect to Our Lady the Virgin, who could have had little pains to rear our Saviour, inasmuch as he was God.

This nursing and Berthe's lack of inclination for the things of wedlock did much rejoice the goodman, forasmuch as he would not have been able to ply zealously the profession of husband, and was fain to economize in order to have the making of a second child. These six years at an end, the mother was compelled to abandon her son to the hands of esquires and the other persons to whom the Sire de Bastarnay gave him in charge to be sturdily fashioned, to the end that his heir should inherit the virtues, noble qualities, and courage of the family with the domains and the name. Thereupon did Berthe weep copiously, for her joy was taken from her. In truth, to that mother's overflowing heart, it was to have no son at all to have her son after others and for a few short paltry fleeting hours. Wherefore, she fell into great melancholy.

Seeing these tears, the goodman strove to make another child, but could not, the which sorely grieved the poor lady, for, she said, the making of a child was most distasteful to her and cost her dear. And this is true, or no doctrine is true, and we must needs burn the Gospels as falsehoods if you place no faith in this artless saying. This notwithstanding, inasmuch as to many women—I do not say men, since they have learning—this would seem a sort of

lying, the writer hath taken heed to deduce the hidden reasons of this oddity,—I mean the distaste of Berthe for that which woman loves above all else,—albeit that lack of jollity did not bring wrinkles to her face or wring her heart. Have you ever met a writer so obliging or so devoted to the ladies as I am? Never, is it not so? Indeed, I love them very dearly, yet not so much as I would like, since I have more often in my hands my goose-quill than the barbs with which one tickles their lips to make them laugh and to jest in all innocence—I mean with them. As thus.

Goodman Bastarnay was not a foppish youth, by nature debauched, a connoisseur in the antics of the thing. He cared little for the manner of killing a soldier, so long as killed he was, and he had killed many a one on all sides, without a word—in the mêlée, be it understood. This entire heedlessness in the matter of death was in harmony with his indifference in the matter of life, birth, and manner of cooking a child in that oven whereof you know. The honest fellow had no knowledge of the innumerable contending, dilatory, interlocutory, preparatory exploits and endearments, little fagots placed in the oven to heat it, twigs smelling of balsam and collected bit by bit in the forests of love, baubles, trinkets, blandishments, endearments, soft words, sweetmeats eaten together, lickings of the cup, after the manner of cats, and other petty suffrages and commerce of love, which lechers know, lovers concoct, and ladies love more than their salvation, forasmuch as they are rather cats than women. This is

most abundantly shown in their manners. If you would pay some attention to them, watch them closely while they eat. Not one of them—I mean the noble and well-educated women—will plunge her knife in the tripe, then of a sudden swallow it, as the brutal men do; but will turn her food over, select, as it were gray peas on a drying-board, the bits that please her, suck the sauces and leave the huge mouthfuls, play with her knife and spoon as if she ate only in obedience to the law, so much do they hate to go straight to their ends, but resort to detours, tricks, and cajolery in everything. The which is the peculiarity of these creatures, and the reason why the sons of Adam dote on them, inasmuch as they do things differently from them and do them well. Do you say yes? Good! I love you.

Now, Imbert de Bastarnay, an old trooper, unlearned in amorous dalliance, entered into the pretty garden called the garden of Venus as into a place carried by assault, paying no heed to the outcries of the poor weeping inhabitants, and planted the child as if he were shooting a crossbow in the dark. Albeit the gentle Berthe was not wonted to such treatment,—she a mere child!—she was fifteen years of age, she believed in her virgin faith that the joy of being a mother demanded that terrible, horrible, crushing, and painful task. Wherefore, during that painful commerce, did she pray earnestly to God to assist her, and recite *Aves* to Our Lady, deeming her most happily mated in that she had to endure

naught but the embraces of the Spirit. Thus, having derived only displeasure from marriage, she never required her husband to marry himself to her.

Now, inasmuch as the goodman was, as hath been said, hardly equal to the task, she lived in perfect solitude, like a nun. She hated the company of man, and misdoubted not that the Creator of this world had planted so much joy in that thing wherefrom she had received naught but infinite suffering. But loved her little one the more, who had cost her so dearly before his birth. You will not wonder, therefore, that she looked askance at the tourney wherein it is the hackney that hath control over her rider, doth guide him and tire him and rail at him if he stumble. This is the veritable history of some wretched marriages, according to the old men and women, and the indubitable reason of the follies of some women, who at last see, I know not how, that they have been gulled, and strive to crowd into a single day more time than it can hold, in order to have their full reckoning of life. Methinks here is philosophy, my friends! Study this page, therefore, to the end that you may watch prudently over the government of your wives, your sweethearts, and all females generally whatsoever, who may, peradventure, be placed in your charge, from whom may God preserve you!

Thus, a virgin in fact, although a mother, Berthe was in the one-and-twentieth year of her age a very castle flower, the glory of her goodman, and the honor of her province. The said Bastarnay

took pleasure in seeing that innocent child go in and out, frisky as a willow switch, lively as a fish, artless as her little one, and, withal, of great good sense, of perfect understanding, to such a degree that he never engaged in any undertaking without seeking advice from her; for, whereas the intellect of these angels hath not been deprived of its clearness, it gives forth a ringing sound on every occasion, when it is called upon.

In those days, the said Berthe dwelt hard by the town of Loches, in her lord's castle, and there abode, not caring to know aught save the affairs of her household, after the ancient custom of chaste wives, wherefrom the ladies of France were weaned when Queen Catherine came thither and her Italians, the great givers of festivals. And to this weaning King François, first of the name, and his successors, lent their hand, whose vile amours corrupted the State no less than the evil deeds of them of the Religion. But this is not my theme.

About this time, the Sire de Bastarnay and his lady were bidden by the king to come to the town of Loches, where he then was with his court, where the fame of Madame de Bastarnay's beauty made much noise. So Berthe came to Loches, received there many flattering attentions from the king, was the centre of the homage of all the young lords, who feasted on the eyes of that love-apple, and of their elders, who warmed themselves in that sun. But be sure that all, old and young, would have suffered a thousand deaths to use those noble

instruments of joy which dazzled the sight and sowed confusion in the brain. There was more speech of Berthe in Loches than of God in the Gospel, whereat were exceeding wroth an infinite number of ladies who found themselves less abundantly supplied with pleasing things, and at the cost of ten nights with the ugliest lord would fain have sent back to her château this fair gleaner of smiles. A young lady, being fully convinced that a friend of her own was enamored of Berthe, was so vexed thereat that therefrom came all the woès of Madame de Bastarnay; but therefrom likewise came her joy and the discovery of the sweet regions of love whereof she was ignorant.

This evil-minded lady had a kinsman who, first of all, did avow to her, at sight of Berthe, that, to enjoy her, he would agree to die after a month passed in making merry with her. Observe that this cousin was fair as a woman is fair, had no hair on his chin, would have obtained mercy from a foe by crying quarter, so melodious was his young voice, and was barely twenty years of age.

"Fair cousin," said she, "leave the room and go to your hôtel, and I will strive to obtain that joy for you. But look to it that you show not yourself to her, nor to yonder baboon grafted on a human stalk by a mistake of nature, to whom that fairy of beauty belongs."

The comely cousin duly hidden, came my lady to rub her treacherous nose against Berthe, called her my love, my treasure, star of beauty, strove

by a thousand means to please her, the better to assure her vengeance on the poor child, who unwittingly had made her lover unfaithful in heart, the which is to a woman ambitious in love the worst of infidelities. After some converse, the said vengeful lady misdoubted that poor Berthe was a virgin in love, seeing in her eyes an abundance of limpid water, no wrinkles at the temples, no tiny black point on the pretty tip of her snow-white nose, where commonly the transports of pleasure leave their mark, no fold on her brow,—in a word, no token of familiarity with joy apparent on her face, which was as free from blemish as the face of an innocent virgin. Then did that traitress ply her with divers woman's questions, and by Berthe's replies became fully assured that, if she had had the mother's profit, the pleasure of love was in very truth unknown to her. Therein was she much pleased for her cousin's sake, good woman that she was. She said to her that there was in the town of Loches a noble maiden of the house of Rohan, who stood in need of the assistance of some woman of rank, to obtain her pardon from Messire Louis de Rohan; that, an she had as much kindness of heart as God had given her of beauty, she would receive the said maiden at her château, be assured of the sanctity of her life, and effect a reconciliation with the Sire de Rohan, who recoiled from receiving her at his manor. To all of which Berthe agreed without hesitation, inasmuch as the misfortunes of the said maiden were known to her, but not the

poor girl herself, who was named Sylvie, and whom she thought to be in foreign lands.

At this point, there is need to set forth for what reason the king had given this fête for the said Sire de Bastarnay. The king suspected the dauphin's first flight to the States of Bourgogne, and wished to take from him so wise a counsellor as the said Bastarnay was. But the old man, faithful to Monseigneur Louis, had already, without a word, tuned his flutes. So he took Berthe back to his château, who told him that she had taken a companion and showed her to him. It was the said nobleman disguised as a maid by the help of his cousin, who was jealous of Berthe, and would fain pollute her, being wroth because of her virtue. Imbert demurred a bit, knowing that it was Sylvie de Rohan; but, being much moved by Berthe's kindness of heart, he thanked her for interposing to lead a lost lamb back to the fold. He fêted his good wife nobly on that last night, left men-at-arms at the château, and set forth with the dauphin for Bourgogne, having a cruel enemy in his bosom, whom he suspected not. The youth's face was unknown to him, for that he was a young page come hither to see the king's court, and who was supported by the Monseigneur Dunois, in whose household he served as bachelor.

The old nobleman, in full confidence that he was a maid, found him exceedingly pious and timid, forasmuch as the youth, fearing the language of his eyes, kept them constantly cast down; then, feeling that Berthe kissed him on the mouth, he trembled

lest his skirt should be indiscreet, and walked to the window, so fearful was he of being recognized for a man by Bastarnay and slain before enjoying his love. So was he joyous as every lover would have been in his place when, the drawbridge lowered, the old lord rode forth into the country. He had had so great a fright that he made a vow to build a pillar at his expense in the cathedral of Tours, because he had escaped the dangers of his mad enterprise. And did, in truth, give fifty silver marks to pay God for his joy. But, as it chanced, he paid yet more to the devil, as will appear from the following facts, if the tale doth please you so well that you have a fancy to follow the narrative, which will be succinct as all good discourse should be.

II

HOW BERTHE CONDUCTED HERSELF WHEN SHE KNEW THE AFFAIRS OF LOVE

The said bachelor was the young Sire Jehan de Sacché, cousin to Monsieur de Montmorency, to whom, at the death of said Jehan, reverted the fiefs of Sacché and other places according to the rules of feudal tenure. He was twenty years of age, and as ardent as live coals. Doubt not, therefore, that the first day was a sore trial. When old Imbert rode away into the country, the two cousins perched on

the top of the portcullis, to the end that they might see him longer, and waved their hands a thousand times in adieu. Then, when the cloud of dust raised by his horses' feet no longer hovered on the horizon, they descended and returned to the hall.

"What shall we do, fair cousin?" said Berthe to the false Sylvie. "Do you love music? shall we sing together? Let us sing a lay of some fine old minstrel. Tell me, is such your inclination? Come to my organ, come! Do this, if you love me! let us sing!"

With that, took she Jehan by the hand and led him to the keyboard of the organ, where the excellent youth seated himself daintily after the manner of women.

"Ha! fair cousin," cried Berthe, when, after touching the first notes, the bachelor turned his head toward her, the better to sing together; "ha! fair cousin, you have a terribly piercing eye! you stir I know not what chord in my heart."

"Ha! cousin," said the wicked Sylvie, "that it is which hath been my undoing. A pretty nobleman of the countries over-sea told me that I had lovely eyes, and kissed them so warmly that I fell, so much pleasure I took in letting them be kissed."

"Prithee, cousin, is love taken through the eyes?"

"Therein is the forge of Cupid's darts, my dear Berthe," said the lover, flashing fire and flames.

"Let us sing, cousin!"

They sang, at Jehan's desire, a ballad of Christine of Pisa, wherein is much vehement talk of love.

"Ha! cousin, what depth and volume of sound there is in your voice! it seeks my very life."

"Where?" said the crafty Sylvie.

"Here," replied Berthe, pointing to her little diaphragm, through which the harmonies of love are heard more distinctly than through the ears, for the reason that the diaphragm lies nearer the heart and that other thing you know of, which is beyond doubt the first brain, the second heart, and the third ear of the ladies. I say this with all respect, for physical reasons and none other.

"Let us sing no more," replied Berthe, "it moves me deeply. Come to the window, we will busy ourselves with trivial tasks till Vespers."

"Ha! dear cousin of my heart, I know not how to hold the needle in my fingers, having, to my undoing, been wonted to other tasks."

"Prithee, what employment have you, then, for all the livelong day?"

"Oh! I let myself float on the current of love, which makes the days like moments, the months like days, and the years like months; and, if it endured, would make eternity to be gobbled like a strawberry, since it is all freshness and perfume, sweetness and infinite joy."

Then did the good youth lower his beautiful lids over his eyes, and was melancholy as a poor damsel deserted by her gallant, who bewails him and would fain hold him in her arms and would forgive him his perfidies, an he but had the heart to seek the sweet pathway to his once loved haven.

"Cousin, doth love bloom in the married state?"

"Nay, nay," said Sylvie, "for that in the married state all is duty, but in love all things are done in liberty of heart. This difference imparts I know not what of sweet balm to the caresses which are the flowers of love."

"Cousin, let us cease this converse; it doth move me even more than the music."

Hastily she whistled for a servant and bade him bring her son, who came, and Sylvie, seeing him, exclaimed:

"Ha! he is as beautiful as Love!"

Then kissed him on the brow.

"Come, my sweet child," said the mother, into whose bosom the little fellow threw himself. "Come, thou, thy mother's pleasure, her only unalloyed joy, her gladness of every hour, her crown, her jewel, her pure pearl, her white soul, her treasure, her light at evening and morning, her heart's sole flame. Give me thy hands that I may devour them, give me thy ears that I may bite them a little; give me thy head that I may kiss thy hair. Be happy, thou little flower of myself, if thou wouldst have me happy."

"Ha! cousin," said Sylvie, "you speak to him in the language of love."

"Prithee, is love childhood?"

"Yes, cousin; therefore did the pagans always portray Love as a child."

Exchanging a thousand other words like these, wherein love grew abundantly, the two charming cousins played with the child till supper.

"Do you not desire another?" said Jehan, at an opportune moment in his cousin's left ear, which he grazed with his hot lips.

"Ah! Sylvie, gladly would I spend a hundred years in hell, an it but pleased the Lord God to grant me that joy. But, despite the toil and labor of my lord spouse, the which is most painful to me, my girdle never varies. Alas! 'tis to have nothing at all to have but a single little one. If a cry arises in the château, my heart beats as if it would burst its bonds. I fear men and beasts for that innocent love; I fear the prancing of horses and handling of weapons,—in a word, everything. I live not in myself, for that I live too much in him. And, alas! I love these trials, because, so long as I am in fear, it is a sign that my offspring is safe and sound. And, to be brief, touching that thereof I would gladly talk until to-morrow, I believe that my breath is in him, not in myself."

Thus speaking, she pressed him to her breasts as mothers alone can press their children, with a spiritual force which crushes naught but their hearts. An you doubt this, watch a cat carrying her little ones in her jaws; not one of them will make a sound. The pretty youth, who had feared to do ill in watering with joy this fair, unfruitful field, was much encouraged by these words. Thenceforth he thought that to win that soul to love would be to follow God's commands, and he thought well.

When evening came, Berthe begged her cousin, according to the ancient custom wherefrom the ladies

of the present day depart, to lie in her company in her great seigniorial bed. To which request the said Sylvie replied that it would be a great pleasure to her, in order that she might not belie her rôle of high-born maiden. And now hath the curfew tolled and the two cousins retired to their chamber decorated with rugs, fringes, and royal tapestries, where Berthe began modestly to disrobe, aided by her tirewomen. Doubt not that the unmarried one modestly declined to allow them to lay hands upon her, and turned a beautiful crimson with shame, saying to her cousin that she had accustomed herself to undress alone, since she was no more waited upon by her beloved who had disgusted her with female hands by his gentle ways; that these preliminaries recalled to her mind the sweet words her lover was wont to say to her and all his foolish acts as he unclothed her, the which brought water to her mouth, to her undoing. This discourse much amazed Dame Berthe, who allowed her cousin to say her *oremuses* and other nightly petitions behind the bed-curtains, wherein my said gentleman, inflamed by fierce desire, did straightway bury himself, in great haste, most happy to be able to spy on the wing the marvellous charms of the châtelaine, who was not spoiled. Berthe, in her full confidence that she was with a deflowered damsel, omitted none of her accustomed practices: she bathed her feet, heedless if she raised them much or little, showed her fair shoulders, and did as all ladies do when they retire. At last, clambered into bed and stretched herself out

there in the right way, kissing her cousin on the lips, which she found very hot.

"Are you ill, Sylvie, that your flesh doth burn so?" she said.

"I burn thus always when I am in bed," was his reply, "for that at this hour there come to my mind memories of the sweet endearments he invented to give me pleasure and which burned me even more."

"Oh! cousin, tell me of this *he*. Tell the good things of love to me who live under the shadow of a hoary head, whose snows preserve me from such ardors. Tell me, you who are cured of them. 'Twill be a useful lesson to me, and thus will your sins have been a salutary warning to two female natures."

"I know not if I should obey you, fair cousin," said the youth.

"Prithee, wherefore not?"

"Ah! 'twere better to do it than to tell it!" he said, emitting a sigh as profound as the lower *C* of the organ. "Moreover, I am fearful that my lord hath so overburdened me with joy, that I may impart a touch of it to you, the which would be enough to give you a daughter, inasmuch as that which makes children would be weakened within me."

"Tell me," said Berthe, "between us would it be sinful?"

"Nay, on the contrary, there would be much rejoicing here and in heaven; the angels would permeate you with their perfumes and fill your ears with their music."

"Tell me, then, straightway, cousin," said Berthe.

"As you will; this is how my noble friend made me all joy."

With that, Jehan took Berthe in his arms and strained her to his heart with unequalled ardor, for, in the light of the lamp and clad in her white robes, she seemed in that damned bed like the pretty seminal organs of the lily in the depths of their virginal calyx.

"And when he held me as I hold you, he would say to me in a voice far softer than mine: 'Oh! Sylvie, thou art my eternal love, my thousand treasures, my joy by day and night; thou art whiter than the day, sweeter than all the world; I love thee more than God, and gladly would I suffer a thousand deaths for the joy I implore of thee.'—Then would he kiss me, not after the manner of husbands, which is brutal, but in dove-fashion."

To demonstrate incontinently how vastly better was the lover's method, he sucked all the honey from Berthe's lips, and taught her how, with her pretty tongue, dainty and rosy as a cat's, she could speak loudly to the heart without saying a word; then, burning ever hotter at that game, Jehan spread the fire of his kisses from the mouth to the neck, from the neck to the daintiest fruits that ever woman gave her babe to bite and suck milk therefrom. And whoever had been in his place would have deemed himself a craven creature not to do likewise.

"Ah!" said Berthe, caught in the birdlime of love unknowing, "this is better: I burn to tell it to Imbert."

"Are you in your senses, cousin? Say not a word to your old husband, for he cannot make his hands, rough as washing-boards, as soft and pleasant as mine, and that piebald beard must sorely prick this centre of delights, this rose wherein lieth all our wit, our well-being, our possessions, our love, our fortune. Know you that 'tis a living flower which would fain be fondled thus, and not handled roughly as if it were a catapult of war? Now, this is the gentle manner of my friend the Englishman."

As he spake, the pretty fellow bore himself so gallantly that there came a volley wherein poor, ignorant Berthe exclaimed:

"Oh! cousin, the angels have come! but so sweet is their music that I no longer hear, and their eyes emit such luminous flashes that my eyes close!"

And, in truth, she suddenly swooned beneath the burden of the joys of love, which burst forth in her even as the highest notes of the organ, which shone gloriously like the most magnificent dawn, which flowed into her veins like the finest perfume, and relaxed the bonds of life, bestowing it upon a child of love, who, in taking possession, makes a certain commotion more moving than any other. In a word, Berthe fancied that she was at the very gates of paradise, so blissfully happy was she, and awoke from that sweet dream in Jehan's arms, saying:

"Would that I had been married in England!"

"My dear mistress," said Jehan, who never before had reaped such exceeding joy, "thou art married to me in France, where things go even better, inasmuch as I am a man who would give a thousand lives for thee, an he had them!"

Poor Berthe uttered a cry so piercing that it pierced the walls, and leaped from her bed as a locust of the plague of Egypt would have done. She fell upon her knees at her *prie-Dieu*, clasped her hands, and wept more pearls than ever Mary Magdalen wore.

"Ah! I am dead," she cried. "I am deceived by a devil who hath assumed an angel's face. I am lost, I am the mother, I doubt not, of a noble child, without being more guilty than thou, Madame la Vierge. Implore my forgiveness at God's hands, an I have not that of men on earth, or put me to death, that I may not blush before my lord and master."

Hearing that she spake no evil against him, Jehan rose, aghast to see Berthe take thus that lovely dance *à deux*. But no sooner did she hear her Gabriel stir than she sprang to her feet, looked at him with tear-bedewed face and eyes alight with holy wrath, the which made them most beautiful to see.

"If you advance a single step toward me," she said, "I will take one toward death!"

And she grasped a ladies' poniard.

Whereupon, so heart-rending was the tragic spectacle of her grief, that Jehan said:

"'Tis not for thee, but for me, to die, my dear beautiful love, more dearly loved than ever woman will be on this earth."

"If you had loved me well, then you would not have undone me thus, for I will die rather than be reproached by my husband."

"You will die?" he said.

"Of a surety," she replied.

"Then, if I am pierced here by a thousand blows, you will find mercy with your husband, to whom you will say that, albeit your innocence was surprised, yet have you avenged his honor by killing him who did deceive you. And 'twill be to me the greatest happiness that can come to me, to die for you, the moment that you refuse to live for me."

On hearing these tender words, spoken in a sobbing voice, Berthe released the dagger; Jehan ran forward and plunged it into his breast, saying:

"Death alone can pay for such happiness."

And fell stiff.

Berthe called her tire-woman, so terrified was she. The woman came and was sadly terrified as well to see a man senseless in madame's chamber and madame supporting him and saying: "What have you done, my friend?" for that she deemed him dead and recalled her excessive joy, and how beautiful Jehan must be for that everyone, even Imbert, deemed him a maiden. In her grief she told all to her tire-woman, weeping and crying that it was all sufficient to have upon her heart the life of a child without having likewise the death of a man. Which

hearing, the poor lover strove to open his eyes, and showed only the white and that but partially.

"Ha! madame, let us not cry out," said the tire-woman, "let us not lose our wits, and let us save this pretty knight. I go to seek La Fallotte, that no physician or surgeon may be admitted to this secret, and she, being a sorcerer, will, to please madame, perform the miracle of healing this wound, so that no trace will appear."

"Hasten!" said Berthe; "I will love thee and benefit thee for this succor."

First of all, the lady and the servant agreed to keep silent touching this adventure and to conceal Jehan from all eyes. Then the tire-woman went by night to seek La Fallotte, and was accompanied by her mistress to the postern, inasmuch as the guard could not raise the portcullis without express orders from Berthe. Berthe found her comely friend in a swoon from the pain of his wound, for the blood was flowing therefrom unchecked. At that sight, she drank a little of that blood, thinking that Jehan had shed it for her. Moved by his great love and by their danger, she kissed the pretty slave of pleasure on the face, bound up his wound, bathing it with her tears, telling him not to die, and that to save his life she would love him very dearly. Be sure that the châtelaine became deeply enamored when she took note of the vast difference between a young lord like Jehan, white, downy, and blooming, and an old fellow like Imbert, hairy, yellow, and wrinkled. This difference recalled to

her mind the difference she had found in the joys of love. Refined by this memory, her kisses became so sweet that Jehan recovered his senses, his glance became clearer, and he was able to see Berthe, whose forgiveness he craved in a weak voice. But Berthe forbade him to speak until La Fallotte should have come. Therefore they whiled the time away by loving with their eyes, for in Berthe's eyes there was naught save pity, and pity is, at such conjunctures, closely akin to love.

La Fallotte was a hunchbacked woman, vehemently suspected of trafficking in necromancy, of flying to the witches' revels astride a broom, according to the custom of sorcerers. Some persons had seen her harnessing her broomstick in her stable, which is, as all know, situated in the gutters of houses. To tell the truth, she had secret remedies, and rendered such useful service to the ladies in certain matters and to their lords, that she passed her days in perfect quietude, nor rendered up her soul over a pile of burning fagots, but in a feather-bed, inasmuch as she amassed basketfuls of crowns, albeit the physicians harassed her, saying that she sold poisons, which was true, as appears in this narrative. The tire-woman and La Fallotte arrived on the same ass, making such haste that the day had not fully dawned when they reached the château.

As she entered the room, the old hunchback said:

"Now, then, what is it, my children?"

This was her manner, which was most familiar with the great, who in her eyes were very small.

She put on her spectacles and very dexterously probed the wound, saying:

"Here is noble blood, my dear, and you have tasted it. It is doing well, for it hath flown outward."

Thus speaking, she bathed the wound with a fine sponge, before the eyes of the lady and the tire-woman, who held their breath. Then did La Fallotte announce with assurance that the gentleman would not die of that stroke, although, she said, on examining his hand, he was destined to die a violent death because of that night's work. This decree of chiromancy much alarmed Berthe and her maid. La Fallotte prescribed the urgent remedies and promised to return the following night. In short, she cared for the wound during some fifteen days, coming at night in secret. The people of the household were told by the tire-woman that Mademoiselle Sylvie de Rohan was in danger of death as the result of a swelling of the belly, the which was to be kept a secret for the honor of madame, who was her cousin. One and all were satisfied by this fib, whereof their mouths were so full that they passed it on to others.

The good people believed that it was the disease wherein lay the danger: but no! it was the convalescence, for the stronger Jehan grew, the weaker grew Berthe, and so weak that she allowed herself to fall into the paradise to whose verge Jehan had raised her. To be brief, she loved him more and more. But, in the midst of her joys, being always tortured by La Fallotte's threatening words, and

conscience-stricken by reason of her great piety, she was in deadly fear of Sieur Imbert, to whom she was constrained to write that he had got her with a child, with whom she would rejoice his heart on his return; but she told therein a lie larger than the child. Poor Berthe shunned Jehan during the whole day that she wrote that wicked letter, for she wept so that she drenched her handkerchief. Seeing that he was shunned, for they stayed apart from each other no more than fire leaves the wood when once it has lapped it, Jehan believed that she hated him and wept in his turn. At evening, Berthe, touched by Jehan's tears, whereof there were traces in his eyes, although he had wiped them, told him the reason of her sorrow, blending therewith the avowal of her fears touching the future, proving to him how they were both at fault, and spake such noble, Christian words, so plentifully adorned with divine tears and penitent prayers, that Jehan was moved to the deepest depths of his heart by his loved one's faith. This love artlessly united to repentance, this nobleness of soul in guilt, this blending of strength and weakness, would, as the ancient authors say, have changed the nature of a tiger, by appealing to its heart. You will not marvel that Jehan was constrained to plight his faith as a true knight to obey her in whatsoever commands she might lay upon him, to save her in this world and the other.

Hearing these words of confidence in her and of his own goodness of heart, Berthe threw herself at Jehan's feet, saying:

"O my love! whom I am fain to love, e'en though it be a deadly sin, thou who art so kind, so pitiful to thy poor Berthe, an thou wouldst have her think always of thee in all gentleness of heart and wouldst stay the torrent of her tears, the source whereof is so sweet and pleasant"—and to prove it to him, let him steal a kiss—"Jehan," she continued, "an it is thy will that the memory of our heavenly joys, angels' music and perfumes of love, should not be burdensome to me, but, on the contrary, should comfort me in evil days, do that which the Virgin hath commanded me to enjoin upon thee, in a dream wherein I implored her to enlighten me touching our present plight, for I had besought her to come to me, and she had come. Thereupon did I set forth to her my horrible and intense agony, trembling for the safety of the little one who is already moving within me, and for the true father, who would be at the other's mercy, and might expiate his paternity by a violent death, inasmuch as La Fallotte may, perchance, have read rightly in the pages of the future. Then did the lovely Virgin say to me, smiling the while, that the Church offered us forgiveness for our sins by following her commandments; that we must needs draw upon ourselves the flames of hell by mending our ways in due season, before Heaven was wroth. Then did she point out to me with her finger a Jehan—John—like unto thee, but clad as thou shouldst be, and as thou wilt be if thou dost love Berthe with an undying love."

Thereupon did Jehan reassert his entire obedience to her by raising her, seating her on his knees, and kissing her warmly. Then did poor Berthe say to him that the other's garb was a monk's gown, and besought him, trembling much, lest he should refuse, to turn monk and retire to Marmoustier, beyond Tours, plighting her word that she would grant him one last night, after which she would think no more of him or of any other man in this world. And in recompense thereof would allow him to come once in each year to her house, that he might see his child. Jehan, bound by his oath, promised to become a monk at his love's desire, saying to her that by that means he should be faithful to her, and would have no other pleasures of love than those enjoyed in his divine intercourse with her, and would live upon their dear remembrance. Hearing these sweet words, Berthe said to him that, however great the sin, and whatsoever fate God had in store for her, that hour would make her strong to endure all, forasmuch as she believed that she had given herself not to a man but to an angel.

So they lay together in the nest wherein their love had bloomed, but it was to bid a last adieu to its lovely flowers. We must needs believe that Signor Cupid took part in that festivity, for never did woman taste a like joy in any place on earth, nor ever man so much. The peculiarity of genuine love is a certain concordance, the result whereof is that the more one gives, the more the other receives,

and reciprocally, as in certain cases in mathematics, where things multiply themselves to infinity. This problem is explicable to them of little learning only by means of what they see in Venetian mirrors, where millions of figures may be seen produced by only one. So, likewise, in the hearts of two lovers, the roses of pleasure multiply in a caressing depth, which causes them to wonder that so much joy can be held therein and nothing burst. Berthe and Jehan would have liked that night to be the last of their lives, and they believed, from the dying languor that filled their veins, that love had determined to carry them off on the wings of a death-dealing kiss; but they held firm despite these infinite multiplications.

On the morrow, inasmuch as Messire Imbert de Bastarnay's return was close at hand, Mademoiselle Sylvie was to take her leave. The poor girl left her cousin, drowning her with tears and kisses; each one was always the last, and the last came not until evening. Then was he forced to leave her and did leave her, although his heart's blood congealed like the wax that drops from an Easter taper. According to his promise, he betook himself to Marmoustier, where he entered about the eleventh hour of the day, and was placed with the novices. To Monseigneur de Bastarnay it was said that Sylvie had returned to the lord, which meaneth the *seigneur* in the English tongue, so that therein Berthe lied not.

The joy of her husband when he saw Berthe without a girdle—for she could not wear it, so big

with child was she—was the beginning of that poor woman's martyrdom, who knew not how to deceive, and who, for each untruth, went to her *prie-Dieu*, wept her blood away in water through her eyes, poured out her soul in prayers, and commended herself to messieurs the saints in paradise. It happened that she cried so loud to God that the Lord heard her, for He hears all things, He hears both the stones that roll beneath the waters, the poor who groan, and the flies that fly through the air. It is well that you should know this, otherwise would you not put faith in that which happened. God bade the Archangel Michael to look to it that this penitent had her hell on earth, to the end that she might enter paradise without contest. Wherefore, Saint Michael came down from heaven to the gate of hell, and delivered that triple soul to the devil, saying to him that he had leave to torment it during the remainder of its days, and pointed out to him, Berthe, Jehan, and the child. The devil, who, by God's decree, is lord of all evil, said to the archangel that he would acquit himself of the said mission.

Pending the execution of this decree, life ran its usual course. The gentle lady of Bastarnay presented Sieur Imbert with the loveliest child in the world, a lily-white and rose-red boy, of as lofty intelligence as a little Jesus, as laughing and mischievous as a heathen Love, growing lovelier from day to day, whereas the elder became of a monkeyish aspect like his father, to whom he bore a startling resemblance. The younger shone like a star,

like his father and mother, whose bodily and mental perfections had produced a blending of noble charms and marvellous understanding. Seeing this constant miracle of flesh and mind blended in the same essence, Bastarnay said that, for his everlasting salvation, he would fain make the younger the elder; that he would reflect thereon with the consent of the king. Berthe knew not what to say, inasmuch as she adored Jehan's child and was unable to love the other more than a very little, yet did she defend him none the less against goodman Bastarnay's cruel designs. Berthe, content with the course affairs were taking, muffled her conscience in falsehood, and thought that all danger was at an end, forasmuch as twelve years passed without other alloy than the doubt which sometimes poisoned her happiness.

Each year, according to their plighted faith, the monk of Marmoustier, who was unknown to all save the tire-woman alone, came to pass one full day at the château to see his child, albeit Berthe had more than once besought Frère Jehan, her friend, to renounce his right. Then would Jehan point to the child, saying:

"Thou dost see him every day in the year, while I have but a single one!"

And the poor mother would find no words to reply to that reproach.

Some months before Monseigneur Louis's last rebellion against his father, the child was close upon the heels of his twelfth year, and seemed like to be

a great scholar, so learned was he in every branch. Never had old Bastarnay felt greater joy in being a father, and determined to take his son with him to the court of Bourgogne, where Duc Charles promised to raise that well-loved son to a height to be envied of princes, for he hated not persons of great intellect. Seeing the harmonious state of affairs, the devil judged that the time to do evil had arrived; he took his tail and planted it in the midst of that happiness, in the good old way, that he might disturb it at his pleasure.

III

SHOCKING CHASTISEMENT AND ATONEMENT OF BERTHE, WHO DIED FORGIVEN

Madame de Bastarnay's tire-woman, who was now thirty-five years of age, became enamored of one of monsieur's men-at-arms, and was so foolish as to let him take divers loaves from her oven, so that there was in her a natural swelling which some wags in these provinces call a nine months' dropsy. This poor woman besought her kind mistress to appeal to her lord, to the end that he should compel this wicked man to complete at the altar that which he had begun in the bed. Madame de Bastarnay had no difficulty in obtaining this favor from her lord, and the tire-woman was well content. But

the old trooper, always rough as the devil, summoned his lieutenant to the common hall, abused him roundly, and bade him, under pain of the halter, espouse the tire-woman, the which the trooper much preferred, caring more for his neck than a quiet life. Bastarnay summoned the woman also, to whom he deemed it his duty, for the honor of his household, to address a whole litany of epithets adorned with horribly loud-sounding decorations, giving her cause to fear lest, by way of punishment, she should be cast into a moat of the gaol, instead of being married. The woman believed that madame desired to be rid of her, in order thereby to bury the secret of her dear son's birth. With that thought, when the old monkey heaped these insulting words upon her, to wit: that one must be mad to keep a whore in one's house, she made answer that he was of a surety more than mad, inasmuch as his own wife had been made a whore long since, and by a monk withal, the which is, for a man of war, the worst of fates.

Recall the most terrific storm that you have seen in all your life, and you will have a feeble image of the paroxysm of green wrath whereinto the old man fell, thus attacked in a part of his heart where there was triple life. He seized the woman by the throat and would have killed her straightway. But she, to justify herself, explained the wherefore and the how, and said that, if he had no confidence in her, he might rely on his ears, biding his time until the day when Dom Jehan de Sacché, prior of Marmoustier, should come thither, then would he hear

the words of the father, taking solace for his year-long fasting, and kissing his son in one day for a whole year. Imbert bade the woman decamp from the château, for that, if her words were true, still would he slay her as surely as if she had invented falsehoods. And in a twinkling gave her a hundred crowns in addition to her man, enjoining them both not to lie in Touraine; and for greater surety they were escorted to Bourgogne by a retainer of my said Sieur de Bastarnay. He informed his wife of their departure, saying to her that the tire-woman was a spoiled fruit, and he had deemed it wise to dismiss her, but had given her a hundred crowns and found employment for the fellow at the court of Bourgogne. Berthe was much surprised to know that her maid was out of the château, without having received leave from her who was her mistress; but she said not a word. And soon thereafter she had other things to think about, and fell into a great dread, for that her lord changed his tone, began to prate of his elder son's resemblance to himself, and found no trace of his nose, nor his forehead, nor of this and that, in that younger son, whom he loved so dearly.

"He is all myself," replied Berthe one day when he indulged in such equivocal remarks; "know you not that in virtuous households children are made by the husbands and by the wives, each in turn, or often by both in company, for that the mother blends her essences with the vital essences of the father? and some surgeons boast of having seen many children brought into the world bearing no

likeness to either, saying that such mysteries are due to God's caprice."

"You have become learned, my love," replied Bastarnay. "But I, who am an ignoramus, believe that a child who should resemble a monk—"

"Would have been made by that monk?" said Berthe, looking him in the face without fear, albeit ice was flowing through her veins in place of blood.

The goodman thought that he had gone astray and cursed the tire-woman, but was none the less eager to verify the thing. As the day due to Dom Jehan was near at hand, Berthe, made suspicious by these words, wrote him that it was her desire that he come not that year, promising to tell him the wherefore; then went to Loches to beg La Fallotte to transmit her letter to Dom Jehan, deeming herself safe for the present hour. She was the more rejoiced that she had writ to her friend the prior, in that Sire Imbert, who, as the time drew nigh for the poor monk's yearly festival, was wont to travel in the province of Maine, where he possessed vast estates, went not thither at this time, alleging the preparations for the uprising which Monseigneur Louis was causing against his poor father, who was so wearied by these constant calls to arms that he died thereof, as everyone knows. This pretext was so good, that poor Berthe fell into the snare and was at ease.

On the appointed day, the prior failed not to appear. Berthe, seeing him, turned pale, and asked him if he had not received her message.

"What message?" said Jehan.

"Then are we lost, the child and thou and I," replied Berthe.

"Wherefore?" said the prior.

"I know not, but our last day has come."

She asked her beloved son where Bastarnay was. The youth replied that his father had been summoned by a messenger to Loches, and would not return till evening. Whereupon Jehan, his love's entreaties notwithstanding, would remain with her and the dear child, assuring her that no harm could befall after twelve years had passed since the birth of their child.

On these days when the night of adventure whereof you know was commemorated, poor Berthe was wont to remain in her chamber with the poor monk till supper. But, on this occasion, the two lovers, spurred on by Berthe's apprehensions, the which were shared by Dom Jehan as soon as his love rehearsed them to him, dined forthwith, albeit the prior of Marmoustier cheered Berthe's heart, reminding her of the privileges of the Church, and that Bastarnay, already in ill-odor at court, would fear to attack a dignitary of Marmoustier. When they took their places at the table, their little one was at his play, and, despite his mother's oft-repeated prayers, would not leave his sport, for he was prancing about the courtyard of the château astride a fine Spanish jennet, which Monseigneur Charles de Bourgogne had bestowed upon Bastarnay. And, forasmuch as young boys like to grow

older, just as varlets play at knights-bachelors and these latter at chevaliers, so did this little fellow delight to show his friend the monk how big a man he was: he made the jennet leap like a flea in the bedclothes, and no more budged in his saddle than if he had been old in the harness.

"Let him have his will, my dear heart," said the monk to Berthe. "Indocile children often become illustrious men."

Berthe ate little, for her heart was swollen like a sponge in water. At the first mouthful, the monk, who was a great scholar, felt in his stomach a disturbance, and in his palate a bitter sting of poison, which led him to misdoubt that Sire de Bastarnay had given them all a dose. Before he was assured thereof, Berthe had already eaten. Suddenly the monk whisked off the cloth and threw the whole into the fireplace, telling Berthe his suspicion. Berthe thanked the Blessed Virgin for that her son had been so bent upon his play. Dom Jehan, not losing his wits, remembered his early trade of page, leaped into the courtyard, took his son from the barb's back, jumped upon him, flew across the fields so swiftly that you would have fancied him a shooting star, had you but seen him digging his heels into the beast's loins as if he would disembowel him, and was at La Fallotte's at Loches in less time than the devil himself would have taken to go from the said château to Loches. The monk made La Fallotte acquainted with the matter in two words, for the poison was already

crackling in his entrails, and begged her to give him an antidote.

"Alas!" said the sorceress, "had I but known that it was for you I delivered the poison, then would I have received in my throat the blade of the dagger wherewith I was threatened, and would have quitted my poor life to save that of a man of God and the sweetest woman who hath ever bloomed upon this earth; for, my dear friend, I have but the small portion of the antidote that is in this phial."

"Is there enough for her?"

"Yes, but go straightway," said the old woman.

The monk returned yet more swiftly than he had come, so that the jennet fell dead beneath him in the courtyard. He hastened to the chamber where Berthe, believing that her last hour was at hand, was kissing her son, twisting like a lizard on fire, nor uttered a cry for herself, but for that child abandoned to Bastarnay's wrath, forgetting her torments at the thought of that cruel future.

"Take this," said the monk; "my life is saved."

Dom Jehan had the mighty courage to say these words with a firm face, although he felt the claws of death griping his heart. And so soon as Berthe had drunk, the prior fell dead, not without kissing his son and looking at his love with an eye which changed not, even after his last breath. That sight turned her to marble and terrified her so that she remained without sign of life before that corpse lying at her feet, grasping her son's hand, who wept, while, on the contrary, her eye was as dry

as the Red Sea when the Hebrews passed through under the guidance of Baron Moses, for she seemed to have sharp grains of sand beneath her eyelids. Pray for her, charitable souls, for of a surety was never woman so tortured as she, divining that her lover had saved her life at his own cost.

Assisted by her son, she did with her own hands lay the monk upon a bed, and stood there, praying with her son, whom she then told that this prior was his father. And in this plight awaited the evil hour, nor did the evil hour fail to come, forasmuch as, toward the eleventh hour, Bastarnay came, and was told, at the portcullis, that the monk was dead, not madame nor the child, and saw his fine jennet foundered. Thereupon, impelled by a frantic desire to kill Berthe and the monk's brat, he mounted the stairs at one bound; but, at the sight of that dead man for whom his wife and the child were reciting litanies, nor ceased at his arrival, having no ears for his violent invectives, having no eyes to see his contortions and threatening gestures, he no longer had the courage to perpetrate that black crime. And, after his first volley was discharged, knew not what to decide and strode about the room like a coward taken at fault, maddened by those incessant prayers over the monk.

The night was consumed in tears, groans, and prayers. By madame's express command, one of her women had gone to Loches to purchase vestments befitting a woman of noble birth, and for her poor child a little horse and an equerry's arms.

Which seeing, Sieur de Bastarnay marvelled much, and sent in quest of madame and the monk's son; but neither the child nor the mother made reply, but donned the garments purchased by the tire-woman. By Berthe's command, this woman adjusted the accounts of madame's household, arranged her clothes, pearls, diamonds, and jewels, as these things are arranged for a widow's renunciation of her rights. Berthe also ordered her alms-chest to be placed over the whole, to the end that the ceremony should be fully performed. The rumor of these preparations ran through the house; whereupon one and all saw that madame was about to go away, the which engendered grief in every heart, even in that of a little scullion come thither but that week, who wept because madame had already said a kindly word to him.

Alarmed by these preparations, old Bastarnay came to madame's chamber and found her weeping by Jehan's body, for her tears had come; but she dried them, seeing her lord husband. To his innumerable questions she made answer briefly by the avowal of her fault, telling how she had been deceived; how the poor page had grieved, showing upon the corpse the mark of the poniard; how long had been his cure; and how, in obedience to her and repentance before God and man, he had become a monk, abandoning his joyous courtier's life, and allowing his name to die out, the which was of a surety worse than death; how she, while avenging her lord's honor, had thought that God himself would not refuse that monk a single day in each year to

see his son, to whom he sacrificed all; how, not choosing to live with a murderer, she was about to leave his house, leaving her worldly goods therein; and henceforth, if the honor of the Bastarnays were stained, then was it he, not she, who caused the shame, for that, in this disaster, she had arranged matters for the best; and finally made a vow that they would go, she and her son, over mountains and valleys, till all was expiated, forasmuch as she knew how to atone for all.

Having said these noble words with much dignity and with pallid cheeks, she took her child by the hand and went forth in deep mourning, more magnificently fair than Hagar when she departed from the house of Abraham the patriarch, and so proud that all the household knelt as she passed, praying to her with clasped hands as to Notre-Dame de la Riche. Pitiful it was to see Sieur de Bastarnay following shamefaced in her suite, weeping, avowing his fault, and desperate as a man being taken to the scaffold there to lose his head.

Berthe would listen to naught. So great was the confusion that she found the drawbridge lowered, and quickened her pace to go forth from the château, fearing lest it might suddenly be raised; but no one had sense or courage. Berthe seated herself on the margin of the pond, in sight of all the household, who implored her with tears to remain. Her poor lord was standing, his hand upon the chain of his drawbridge, dumb as one of the stone saints carved above the porch; he saw Berthe order her son to

shake the dust from his shoes upon the bridge, to the end that he might take naught away belonging to the Bastarnays, and she did likewise. Then pointed her finger at the lord, and spake thus to her son, with solemn gesture:

"Child, yonder stands the murderer of thy father, who was, as thou knowest, the poor prior; but thou hast taken that man's name. Now thou wilt see that thou must restore it to him, even as thou dost leave here the dust which thy shoes have brought from his château. For the cost of thy support in his house we will also settle the account, with God's help."

Hearing this discourse, old Bastarnay would have given his wife a whole convent of monks, in order not to be abandoned by her and by an esquire capable of being the glory of his family, and stood with his head resting against the chains.

"Demon!" cried Berthe, not knowing how great had been the demon's part in this, "art thou content? May God, the saints, and the archangels, to whom I have prayed so earnestly, come to the succor of this ruin!"

Berthe's heart was of a sudden filled with holy consolation, for, lo! the banner of the great convent appeared coming across the fields, accompanied by the chants of the Church, which soared upward like divine voices. The monks, informed of the murder done upon their beloved prior, came in procession to seek his body, attended by the ecclesiastical authorities. Seeing which, Sieur de Bastarnay

had barely time to go forth through the postern with his men-at-arms, leaving everything in confusion.

Poor Berthe, *en croupe* behind her son, rode to Montbazon to bid adieu to her father, saying to him that she would die of the blow, and was there comforted by her kindred, who strove to restore her courage, but could not. The old Sire de Rohan bestowed upon his grandson a fine suit of armor, bidding him win glory and honor by his noble deeds, whereby he would transform his mother's fault into everlasting glory. But Madame de Bastarnay had implanted in her dear son's mind no other thought than that of atoning for her sin, in order to save her and Jehan from everlasting damnation. Wherefore went they both to the places where the rebellion was in progress, in the desire to render such service to my said Sieur de Bastarnay that he should receive from them more than life. Now, the fire of sedition was burning, as all know, in the neighborhood of Angoulême and of Bordeaux in Guyenne, and in other places of the kingdom where great battles and meetings between the rebels and the royal armies were destined to take place. The principal one, which ended the war, was fought between Ruffec and Angoulême, where those taken were hanged and quartered. This battle, wherein old Bastarnay commanded, took place about the month of November, seven months after the murder of Dom Jehan. Now, the baron well knew that a price was set upon his head as being principal adviser of Monseigneur Louis. And so, at a time

when his men were far behind, the goodman found himself surrounded by six men-at-arms determined to seize him. Thereupon, he understood that they designed to take him alive, in order to proceed against his family, ruin his name, and confiscate his possessions. The poor man preferred to die to save his kinsmen and preserve his estates for his son; he defended himself like a true lion as he was. Despite their number, these said men-at-arms, when three of them had fallen, were forced to attack Bastarnay at the risk of killing him, and fell upon him in concert after having laid low his esquires and a page. In this extreme peril, an esquire bearing the crest of the Rohans burst upon the assailants like a thunder-clap, and slew two of them, crying: "God save the Bastarnays!" The third man-at-arms, who had already laid hold of old Bastarnay, was pressed so close by this esquire that he was fain to relax his hold, and turned against the esquire whom he stabbed with his dagger at the joint in his gorget. Bastarnay was too loyal a knight to fly without bearing aid to the savior of his house, whom he saw in the death-agony as he turned. Thereupon, he struck down the man-at-arms with a blow of his mace, took the esquire across his saddle, and rode away, guided by a man who led him to the castle of Roche-Foucauld, which he entered by night, and found in the common hall Berthe de Rohan, who had managed that retreat for him. But, as he removed his rescuer's head-piece, he recognized the son of Jehan, who expired

on the table, kissing his mother with a last effort, and saying in a loud voice:

"Mother, we have paid our debt to him!"

Hearing which, the mother clung lovingly to her child's body and was united to him forever, forasmuch as she died of grief, paying no heed to Bastarnay's pardon or his penitence.

This strange catastrophe so hastened the poor lord's last day, that he saw not the accession of our good sire Louis the Eleventh. He founded a daily mass at the church of La Roche-Foucauld, wherein he bestowed in the same tomb the mother and the son with a great epitaph writ in Latin, wherein their lives are much lauded.

The morals which everyone can draw from this tale are most profitable in the conduct of life, forasmuch as this demonstrates how courteous gentlemen should be with their wives' lovers. Furthermore, this teaches us that all children are treasures sent by God himself, upon whom fathers, false or true, have not the right to do murder, as in the old days at Rome, by an abominable heathen law, which becometh not the Christian world, where we are all children of God.

HOW THE FAIR MAID OF PORTILLON COZENED HER JUDGE

La Portillonne, who became, as everyone knows, La Tascherette, was a laundress before being a dyeress, in the town of Portillon, whence her name. If there be those who know not Tours, there is need to say that Portillon is beyond the Loire, hard by Saint-Cyr, as far from the bridge which leads to the cathedral of Tours as the said bridge is from Marmoustier, inasmuch as the bridge is in the middle of the embankment between Portillon and Marmoustier. Do you understand?—Yes?—Good!

To resume: there the girl had her laundry, whence she could, in a twinkling, trip down to the Loire to wash, and cross by a ferry to Saint-Martin on the other side of the river, whither she carried a great part of her washing, to return it in Châteauneuf and other places.

About Saint John's Day, seven years before her marriage to goodman Taschereau, she was of an age to be loved. As she was of a merry humor, she let herself be loved without choosing any of the youths who pursued her with love. Albeit she had on her bench beneath her window the son of Rabelais, who had seven boats on the Loire, the elder of

the Jahans, Marchandeau the tailor and Peccard the goldsmith, she made sport of them unceasingly, for it was her design to be taken to church before burdening herself with a man, which proves that she was a virtuous girl, nor was her virtue assailed with filth. She was of those maids who preserve themselves with care from being contaminated, but who, when taken unawares, let everything go, with the thought that for one spot, no less than for a thousand, it is always necessary to refurbish one's self. We should be indulgent to such characters.

A young lord of the court saw her one day when she was crossing the water at midday in a very hot sun which made her ample charms gleam again, and, seeing her, inquired who she was. An old man, who worked on the shore, named her to him as the fair maid of Portillon, a laundress well known for her merry laughter and her virtue. This young lord, who had ruffles to be starched, had much very fine linen and other things; he determined to give the custom of his household to the beauty of Portillon, whom he detained as she passed. He was thanked by her and heartily, for he was Sieur du Fou, the king's chamberlain. This encounter made the fair maid so happy that she had her mouth filled with that name. She spake much of him to them of Saint-Martin, and, on returning to her laundry, still talked of him; then, on the morrow, prated of him while washing in the river; thus was there more discourse of Monseigneur du Fou in Portillon than of God in the pulpit, the which was overmuch.

"If she beats thus when cold, what will she do when hot?" said an old hag of a laundress; "she wants Du Fou, and he will cook her, will Du Fou!" *

The first time that this madcap with her mouth full of Monsieur du Fou had clothes to deliver at his palace, the chamberlain must needs see her and sang *laudes* and *complines* touching her charms, and ended by saying to her that she was no fool to be beautiful, and, for her beauty, would pay her lance in rest. The act followed the word, for, at a moment when his people left them alone, he fondled the fair maid, who thought that she saw him taking pretty *deniers* from his pocket, but dared not look at the pocket, like a maid ashamed to receive her wages, saying:

"This will be for the first time."

"'Twill be soon," said he.

Some say that he had not much pains to force her and forced her but gently; some deemed her to have been cruelly forced, for that she came forth like an army lagging behind, overflowed in complaints and lamentations, and went to the judge. It so happened that my said judge was in the country. La Portillonne awaited his return in the common hall, weeping, saying to the servant that she had been robbed, for that Monseigneur du Fou had given her nothing at all save his villainy, whereas a canon of the chapter used to give her great sums for that whereof Monseigneur du Fou had robbed

*A play upon the similarity in sound between this name and the word *feu* —fire.

her; if she loved a man, she would esteem it wise to bestow that pleasure on him, for the reason that she herself would take pleasure therein; but that the chamberlain had harassed and wearied her, and had not fondled her gently, as she expected to be fondled, consequently he owed her the canon's thousand crowns.

The judge returned, saw the fair maid, and would have toyed with her, but she stood on her guard and said that she had come to make a complaint. The judge made answer that of a surety there should be a man hanged after her fashion, if she so willed, for that he was in a frenzy to deal the hundred and one strokes for her. The fair maid said to him that she would not have her man hanged, but would have him pay her a thousand gold crowns, for that she was forced against her will.

"Oho!" said the judge, "that flower is worth more."

"For a thousand crowns," said she, "will I release him, for then I may live without my washing."

"Is he who hath stolen this joy well supplied with *deniers?*" queried the judge.

"Oh! aye."

"Then shall he pay dear. Who is he?"

"Monseigneur du Fou."

"That puts a different face on the affair," said the judge.

"And justice?"

"I said the affair, not justice," replied the judge. "I must needs know how the thing took place."

Thereupon did the fair maid artlessly narrate how she was placing the ruffles in monseigneur's chest, when he had toyed with her petticoat and she had turned, saying:

"Have done, monseigneur!"

"That is enough," said the judge, "forasmuch as from those words he hath believed that you gave him leave to have done ardently. Ha! ha!"

The fair maid averred that she had defended herself, weeping and shrieking, the which constituted the rape.

"A maiden's antics to incite!" said the judge.

To conclude, La Portillonne said that, despite her efforts, she had felt that she was grasped about the waist, borne backward to the bed, after she had much struggled and cried, but that, finding that no succor came to her, she had lost heart.

"Good! good!" said the judge; "did you have pleasure?"

"No," said she. "My suffering can be paid for only by a thousand gold crowns."

"My love," said the judge, "I cannot receive your complaint, forasmuch as I believe that no woman can be violated against her will."

"Oh! oh! monsieur," said she, weeping, "ask your servant and listen to what she will tell you."

The servant averred that there were pleasant rapes and very painful rapes; that if La Portillonne had received neither gold nor pleasure, then either

pleasure or gold was due to her. This sage opinion cast the judge into very great perplexity.

"Jacqueline!" he said, "I propose to settle this before I sup. Go and fetch my needle with the red thread wherewith to sew up bags for documents."

Jacqueline returned with a needle pierced with a pretty little hole in all perfection and a coarse red thread such as men of the law use. Then the servant tarried, to see the judge pass judgment on the petition, being intensely excited, as was the fair maid, by these mystifying preparations.

"My dear," said the judge, "I will hold the needle, the hole whereof is large enough to admit this thread without difficulty. An you thrust it in, then will I undertake your cause and will make monseigneur disgorge by a compromise."

"What does that mean?" she said. "I do not wish to promise."

"That is a legal word meaning an agreement."*

"A compromise, then, is the nuptials† of the law?"

"My dear, the rape hath opened your wit as well. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said she.

The cunning judge led the outraged wench a fine dance, holding the hole most fairly; but, when she sought to put in the thread, which she had twisted to make it go straight, the judge moved a bit, and

* *Accord.*
† *Accordailles.*

the maid lost her first stroke. She misdoubted the argument the judge had in mind, wet the thread, thrust and thrust again. The good judge moved, twisted and squirmed like a maid who dares not. And the damned thread would not enter. The fair maid applied herself to the hole and the good judge wriggled. The nuptials of the thread were not consummated; the hole remained unpolluted, and the servant laughed, saying to La Portillonne that she was better able to be raped than to rape. Then the good judge laughed, and the fair Portillonne bewailed her gold crowns.

"If you stay not in place," said the fair maid, losing patience, "and keep always moving, I can never enter that narrow place."

"Even so, my daughter, if thou hadst done thus, monseigneur would not have undone thee. Consider also how easy this passage is and how tightly closed a virgin must be!"

The fair maid, who claimed to have been forced, fell into a reverie, and sought to put the judge to shame by pointing out to him how she had been constrained to yield, forasmuch as the honor was involved of all the poor girls capable of being violated.

"That the thing should be fairly set forth, monsieur, I must needs do as monseigneur did. An I had had naught to do but move, I should be moving still, but he performed other ceremonies."

"Let us hear," said the judge.

Then did La Portillonne wet the thread and coat it with wax from the candle, to the end that it

should remain firm and straight. Then, the thread duly prepared, thrust at the hole which the judge held out to her, moving always to left and right. And the fair maid said a thousand coaxing words, as: "Ah! the pretty hole! What a sweet target! Never have I seen such a jewel! Such a dear eye! Let me insert this persuasive thread! Ah! ah! ah! you will hurt my poor thread, my precious thread! be calm! Go to, my love of a judge, judge of my love! Say! will not the thread go well in that iron door which will use up much thread, since the thread comes forth much out of order?"

And she laughed aloud, forasmuch as she already was more adroit at this game than the judge, who laughed likewise, so comical and sly and cunning she was as she thrust and withdrew the thread. She detained my said master judge, needle in hand, until seven o'clock, always moving and jumping about like an unchained marmoset, but, as La Portillonne strove always to insert the thread, he could do no more, especially as he was on fire, and his wrist so fatigued that he was compelled to rest an instant on the edge of the table, whereupon the fair maid of Portillon most adroitly thrust in the thread, saying:

"That is how the thing took place."

"But I was on fire," said he.

"And so was I," replied she.

The judge, abashed, said to La Portillonne that he would say a word to Monseigneur du Fou and would undertake the suit, forasmuch as he was

convinced that the young nobleman had forced her against her will, but that, for good and sufficient reasons, he would carry on the negotiations in secret. On the morrow the judge went to the court and saw Monseigneur du Fou, to whom he set forth the maid's complaint and how she had narrated the affair to him. This complaint was most diverting to the king. Young du Fou having said that there was truth therein, the king asked him if he had found the approaches difficult, and, as Sieur du Fou artlessly made answer in the negative, the king rejoined that that adventure was well worth a hundred crowns, and the chamberlain counted them out to the judge, that he might not be accused of miserliness, but said that the starching would bring La Portillonne a goodly revenue.

The judge returned to Portillon, and, smiling, told the fair maid that he had levied a hundred gold crowns for her. But, if she desired the remainder of the thousand crowns, there were at that moment, in the king's chamber, divers lords, who, knowing the facts, offered to make up the sum for her at her pleasure. The fair maid refused not the offer, saying that, to avoid washing in the future, she would gladly wash herself a little. She largely rewarded the worthy judge's labors, then earned her thousand gold crowns within a month. Hence came the lies and foolish tales concerning her, forasmuch as jealous rivals magnified the ten nobles to a hundred, whereas, contrariwise to most wenches, La Portillonne became virtuous as soon as she had her thousand gold

crowns. Even a duke who would not have haggled at five hundred crowns would have found the maid steadfast to reject his suit, the which proves that she was chary of her favors.

True it is that the king summoned her to his retreat on Rue Quinquangrogne, at the mall of Le Chardonneret, found her most fair and a staunch fighter, made merry with her, and forbade his officers to molest her in anywise. Seeing how fair she was, Nicole Beaupertuys, the king's sweetheart, gave her a hundred gold crowns to go to Orléans and see if there the color of the Loire was the same as at Portillon. The fair maid went thither the more willingly in that she cared not for the king. When came the holy man who confessed the king in his last days and was thereafter canonized, the fair maid went to him to furbish up her conscience, did penance, and founded a bed in the lazar-house of Saint-Lazare at Tours.

Many ladies whom you know have been outraged willingly by more than ten lords without founding other beds than those in their own houses. It was needful to set forth this fact, in order to cleanse the honor of this honest maid, who washed the soiled clothes of others, and afterward won so great renown by her charms and her wit; she gave proof of her merit by marrying Taschereau, whom she cuckolded right royally, to the great satisfaction of both, as hath already been narrated in the tale of the *Apostrophe*.

This proves to us most amply that with skill and patience one can also violate justice.

WHEREIN IT IS PROVED THAT FORTUNE IS ALWAYS FEMININE

In the days when knights courteously bore one another aid and countenance in the quest for fortune, it happened that in Sicily,—which is, if you know it not, an island situated in a corner of the Mediterranean Sea, and famous ages since,—in a certain forest, a knight fell in with another knight who had the aspect of a Frenchman. To all appearance, this Frenchman was destitute in every respect, forasmuch as he travelled on foot, without esquire or suite, and his whole accoutrement was so miserable that, but for his princely air, he might have been taken for a villein. It was possible that his horse had died of hunger or fatigue on disembarking from over-sea, whence the young sire came, on the faith of the excellent fortune that Frenchmen encountered in the said Sicily, the which was true on both sides. The Sicilian knight, whose name was Pezare, was a Venetian who had shaken the dust of the Venetian Republic from his feet long before, and was in nowise anxious to return thither, inasmuch as he had gained a foothold at the court of Sicily. Now, being without means in Venice, for that he was a younger son, he knew naught of affairs, and

finally had been for that reason abandoned by his family, which was nevertheless most illustrious; he dwelt at that court, where he was in high favor with the king. The said Venetian rode a fine Spanish jennet, and was reflecting as he rode, how utterly alone he was in that strange court, without sure friends, and how, in such circumstances, fortune frowned upon friendless folk and turned traitress, when he saw this poor French knight, who seemed yet more destitute than he, who had fine arms, a fine horse and retainers at an inn, where they were preparing an ample supper.

"You must needs have come a long way to have so much dust on your feet," said the Venetian knight.

"My feet bear not the dust of all my journeying," replied the Frenchman.

"An you have journeyed so far," said the Venetian, "you must be learned."

"I have learned," replied the Frenchman, "to pay no heed to them who pay no heed to me. I have learned that howsoever high a man's head might be, his feet were always on a level with mine; moreover, I have learned not to trust hot weather in winter, the slumber of my foes, or the words of my friends."

"Then are you richer than I," said the Venetian, marvelling greatly, "for you say things to me whereof I had not thought."

"Everyone must needs think on his own account," said the Frenchman, "and, inasmuch as you have questioned me, I may request from you

the service of pointing out to me the road to Palermo, or some hostelry, for night is at hand."

"Know you any Frenchman or Sicilian noble at Palermo?"

"No."

"In that case, you are not assured of a welcome there?"

"I am inclined to forgive them who may turn me away.—The road, my lord?"

"I am lost like you," said the Venetian; "let us seek it in company."

"To do so, we must needs journey together; but you are on horseback and I on foot."

The Venetian took the French knight *en croupe* and said to him:

"Do you divine with whom you are?"

"With a man, so it would seem."

"Think you that you are in safety?"

"If you were a thief, I should fear for your life," said the Frenchman, placing the hilt of a dagger at the Venetian's heart.

"Signor Frenchman, you seem to me a man of much learning and great good sense: know that I am a nobleman firmly established at the court of Sicily, but alone; and that I seek a friend. You seem to me to be in the same plight, and, judging by appearances, you are not on good terms with your lot and seem to stand in need of all the world."

"Should I be happier, an all the world were in relations with me?"

"You are a devil, who make me blush for every

word I speak. By Saint Marc, sir knight, may I trust in you?"

"More than in yourself, who begin our friendship by deceiving me, for you guide your horse like one who knows his road, yet did you say that you were lost."

"And do you not deceive me," said the Venetian, "by causing a sage youth like yourself to go on foot and giving to a noble chevalier the aspect of a villein? Here is the hostelry; my servitors have prepared our supper."

The Frenchman leaped down from the horse and entered the inn with the Venetian knight, accepting his proffered supper. Then did they both fall to. The Frenchman played so deliberately with his jaws, dissected the morsels with such readiness, that he proved himself to be equally learned in suppers, and proved it anew by very dexterously emptying the pots, without clouding his eye or disturbing his understanding. Doubt not, therefore, that the Venetian said to himself that he had fallen in with a stout son of Adam, sprung from the good rib, not from the false. As they drank together, the Venetian knight strove to find some joint to probe the secret apostemes of his new friend's cogitations. Thereupon, he discovered that he would sooner make him lay aside his shirt than his prudence, and deemed it a fit time to win his esteem by opening his heart to him. So he told of the then state of Sicily, where Prince Leufroid reigned and his gentle wife; how gallant was their court, and of the courtesy that

flourished there; that there were many nobles there from Spain, France, Italy, and other lands, lords of high plumage, handsomely apportioned, and many princesses as rich as noble and as beautiful as rich; that that prince aspired to the most exalted aims, as to conquer the Morea, Constantinople, Jerusalem, the Sultan's territories, and other parts of Africa; some men of great ability had a hand in his affairs, convoked the ban and the arriere-ban of the flower of Christian knighthood, and sustained that splendor with intent to secure the domination over the Mediterranean of that Sicily so opulent in ancient times, and to ruin Venice, which had not an inch of territory. That these designs had been implanted in the king's mind by him, Pezare; but, although he was high in the prince's favor, he felt that he was weak, had no supporter among the courtiers and desired to obtain a friend. In this extreme difficulty, he had ridden forth with intent to meditate and resolve upon some course. And inasmuch as, in that conjuncture, he had fallen in with a man of sense as the chevalier had proved to be, he would propose to him that they unite as brothers, would open his purse to him and welcome him to his palace; together they would march onward to high honors through paths of pleasure, with no secrets from each other, and would bear each other aid under all circumstances, like brothers in arms in the Crusade; and, inasmuch as he, the Frenchman, was seeking fortune and needed aid, he, the Venetian, believed that this offer of mutual consolation would not be spurned.

"Albeit I stand in no need of aid," said the Frenchman, "inasmuch as I place my trust in something that will grant me all that I desire, still would I fain acknowledge your courtesy, dear Chevalier Pezare. You will see that ere long you will be the debtor of Chevalier Gauttier de Montsoreau, gentleman of the pleasant province of Touraine."

"Have you no relic wherein your fortune resides?" asked the Venetian.

"A talisman given me by my dear mother," said the Tourangean, "wherewith châteaux and cities may be built, aye, and demolished, too, a hammer to coin money, a remedy to cure all ills, a travelling staff which may be put in pawn and is in that light of much value, a master tool which doth execute wondrous carvings in all forges, without noise."

"Ha! by Saint Marc! you have a mystery in your halberd."

"Nay," said the Frenchman, "the thing I speak of is nature's own work, and here it is."

And, rising from the table of a sudden to seek his bed, Gauttier showed the finest instrument of joy that the Venetian had ever seen.

"This," said the Frenchman, when they lay together in the same bed, according to the custom of that time, "smooths all obstacles, by making itself master of female hearts, and, inasmuch as the ladies are queens in this court, soon will your friend Gauttier reign here."

The Venetian was amazed beyond measure at sight of the said Gauttier's hidden beauties, who

had, in fact, been marvellously well constituted by his mother, and perchance by his father likewise, and was destined thereby to triumph over all, since there was joined to that corporeal perfection the wit of a young page and the wisdom of an old devil. So they swore to be true comrades to each other, counting for naught a woman's heart, swearing to be but one man and to have but a single thought, as if their heads were within the same cap; then did they fall asleep on the same pillow, enchanted by this fraternity. Thus did things come about in those days.

On the morrow, the Venetian bestowed a fine barb on his friend Gauttier, likewise a purse filled with bezants, fine silken hose, doublet of velvet stitched with gold, and an embroidered cloak, the which garment heightened his noble mien and displayed his charms to such advantage that the Venetian thought that he would cajole all the ladies. His servants were commanded to obey Gauttier as himself, so that the said servants believed that their master had been out to fish and had caught this Frenchman.

Then did the two friends make their entry into Palermo, at the hour when the prince and princess were walking out. Pezare proudly presented his friend the Frenchman, extolling his merits, and procured so gracious a welcome for him that Leufroid detained him to supper. The French knight observed the court with a shrewd eye and discovered there an infinite number of curious intrigues.

If the king was a valiant and comely prince, the princess was a Spaniard of ardent temper, the loveliest and most dignified lady in his court, albeit something melancholic. At sight of her, the Tourangean esteemed that she was but indifferently served by the king, for it is the law in Touraine that a joyous face proceeds from joy elsewhere.

Pezare speedily pointed out to his friend Gauttier divers ladies to whom Leufroid addressed himself with much complaisance, who were most jealous of one another and vied with one another in amorous advances, in a very jousting of gallantries and wondrous feminine devices. From all of which it was considered by Gauttier that the king lechered freely in his court, albeit he had the loveliest wife in the whole world, and busied himself affixing the royal seal upon all the ladies in Sicily, to the end that he might put his horse in their stables, vary his provender, and learn the modes of riding in all lands.

Observing the life that Leufroid led, Monsieur de Montsoreau, well assured that no one in that court had had the courage to enlighten the queen, determined to plant his shaft at the first flight fair in the field of the fair Spaniard, by a master-stroke. In this wise. At supper, to do honor to the stranger knight, the king took heed to place him next the queen, to whom the gallant Gauttier offered his hand to lead her to the hall, and led her hastily, to gain ground on them who followed, to the end that he might say to her at the very beginning a word

upon those matters which are always pleasing to the ladies, whatsoever their station. Imagine what that word was, and how straight it flew through the cabbages into the burning bush of love.

"I know, madame la reine, the reason that your checks are pale."

"What may it be?" she said.

"You are so pleasant in love that the king enjoys you night and day; thereby you abuse your advantages, for he will die of love."

"What must I do to keep him in life?" queried the queen.

"Forbid him to worship at your altar beyond three *oremuses* each day."

"You would jest, according to the French fashion, sir knight, forasmuch as the king hath told me that the utmost of his devotions was a simple *Pater* once in each week, under pain of death."

"You are deceived," said Gauttier, seating himself at the table; "I can prove to you that love should say mass, vespers, and complines, likewise an *Ave*, from time to time, for queens as well as for women without rank, and should perform that office every day as monks do in their convents, with fervor; but, in your case, those charming litanies would never end."

The queen cast upon the comely French knight a glance wherein was no anger, smiled, and shook her head.

"Therein," she said, "men are great liars."

"I carry a great truth, the which I will show you

at your pleasure," replied the knight. "I boast that I can afford you a queen's cheer, and lead you straight to the very heart of joy; thereby will you redeem lost time, the more in that the king has ruined himself for other ladies, whereas I will preserve my advantages for your service."

"And if the king should learn of our agreement, he would put your head beside your feet."

"Even though that evil fortune should befall me after a first night, yet should I feel that I had lived a hundred years for the joy I had known; for know that, after having seen all the courts in Christendom, I have never seen a princess who could be compared with you in beauty. To be brief herein, an I die not by the sword, then shall I die by your means, inasmuch as I have resolved to expend my life in our love, an it be true that life departs at the place whence it is given."

Never had this qeeen listened to such discourse, and was more pleased therewith than to listen to the best chanted mass; the which was manifest on her face, which became purple, for that these words made the blood boil in her veins, so that the strings of her lute were stirred thereby and struck a full chord that rang in her ears; for this said lute fills with its notes the minds and bodies of the ladies by a very cunning ruse of their resonant nature. What an abomination to be young, fair, a queen, a Spaniard, and hardly used! She conceived a deathly disdain for those of her courtiers whose lips had been closed touching the king's treachery,

through fear of him, and determined to avenge herself with the aid of this comely Frenchman, who recked so little of life that in his first speech to her he risked it recklessly by daring to address a queen in words that would cost him his head, were she to do her duty. But, on the contrary, she pressed his foot, placing her own upon it in most meaning fashion, and saying to him aloud:

"Sir knight, let us talk of other things, for it ill becomes you to attack a poor queen in her weak spot. Tell us the customs of the ladies of the court of France."

Thus did the youth receive the deftly-given notice that the affair was settled. Thereupon, he poured forth a stream of diverting foolery which throughout the supper maintained the court, the king, the queen, and all the courtiers in gayety of heart, so that, on rising from the table, Leufroid averred that he had never made so merry. Then walked they in the gardens, which were the finest in the world, and where the queen alleged the sayings of the stranger knight as an excuse for walking with him beneath a grove of flowering orange-trees which exhaled a sweet fragrance.

"Fair and noble queen," said Gauttier straightway, "in all lands have I seen that the cause of amorous disasters lies in the first acts of deference which we call courtesy; if you have confidence in me, let us agree, like persons of sound understanding, to love without so much ill-advised ceremony; thus will no suspicion be entertained without, we

shall be happy without danger and for a long time. So should queens act under pain of being prevented."

"Well said," said she. "But, inasmuch as I am new at this trade, I know not how to make my preparations."

"Have you among your women one in whom you can place much confidence?"

"Yes," said she, "I have one who came hither from Spain with me, who would lie upon a gridiron for me as Saint Laurent did for God, but she is always ailing."

"'Tis well," said the worthy youth, "for then you go to visit her."

"Even so," said the queen, "and sometimes at night."

"Ah!" said Gauttier, "I make a vow to give Sainte Rosalie, the patron saint of Sicily, an altar of pure gold for this good fortune."

"Jesus!" exclaimed the queen, "I am doubly happy in that this gentle lover of mine hath so much piety."

"Ah! my dear lady, I have two religions to-day, for that I have to love one queen in heaven and another here on earth, the which loves, happily, do in nowise prejudice each other."

These touching words moved the queen beyond measure, and for a mere nothing she would have fled with this crafty Frenchman.

"The Virgin Mary is very powerful in heaven," said the queen; "may love make me like her!"

"Pah! they are talking of the Virgin Mary," said the king, who had, as it happened, come to spy upon them, impelled thereto by a shaft of jealousy aimed at his heart by a Sicilian courtier, enraged by the sudden favor of the damned Frenchman.

The queen and the chevalier took their measures, and all was cunningly arranged to adorn the king's morion with invisible plumes. The Frenchman rejoined the court, made himself liked by all, and returned to Pezare's palace, to whom he said that their fortunes were made, for that on the morrow, at night, he should lie with the queen. This so rapid progress dazzled the Venetian, who, like a good friend, looked to the providing of fine perfumes, Brabant linen, and other priceless apparel adapted to the use of queens, wherewith he armed his dear Gauttier, to the end that the box should be worthy of the drug.

"O my friend!" he said, "art thou sure of not stumbling, of going straight, of serving the queen well and giving her such joy in her château of Gallardin, that she will cling forever to that master-staff, as shipwrecked sailors to their planks?"

"Prithee, have no fear, dear Pezare, for know that I have the arrearages of my journeyings, and I will deal with her right cavalierly, like a simple maid-servant, showing her all the customs of the ladies of Touraine, who know love better than all others, for that they make it, remake it, and unmake it to remake it once more, and, having remade it, make it forever and ever, nor have aught else to do

than that thing, which crieth always to be done. Now, let us agree upon our plans. Thus will we divide the government of this island. I will hold the queen and thou the king; we will play the comedy of being bitter foes in the eyes of the courtiers, to the end that we may divide them into two parties under our command, and will remain friends, unknown to all; by this means shall we know their intrigues and defeat them, thou lending an ear to my enemies, and I to thine. Thus, a few days hence, we will feign a quarrel, in order to try our strength against each other. This dispute will have for its cause the height to which I shall have exalted thee in the king's mind through the influence of the queen, so that he will grant thee the supreme power, to my prejudice."

On the morrow, honest Gauttier went by stealth to the apartments of the Spanish lady, whom, in presence of the courtiers, he feigned to have known much in Spain, and there he abode seven whole days. As all will believe, the Tourangean treated the queen like a dearly-loved woman, and caused her to see so many countries unknown to her in love, French fashions, contortions, endearments, and consolations, that she was nigh going mad and swore that the French alone knew how to make love. Thus was the king punished, who, to maintain her in virtue, had stacked sheaves of straw in that sweet granary of love.

This superhuman celebration made so great an impression on the queen, that she vowed eternal

love to honest Montsoreau, who had awakened her, by disclosing to her the refinements of the thing. It was agreed that the Spanish lady should be careful to be always ill, and that the only man in whom the lovers should confide should be the surgeon-in-ordinary, who was most devoted to the queen. It chanced that this surgeon had in his epiglottis chords in all points similar to Gauttier's, so that, by a freak of nature, they had the same voice, whereat the queen marvelled greatly. The surgeon swore upon his life to serve the pretty couple loyally, for he deplored the lamentable neglect of that lovely woman, and was overjoyed to know that she was treated as a queen should be: a rare case.

When the month had passed, affairs progressed to the great content of the two friends, who fashioned the snares laid by the queen, to the end that the government of Sicily should fall into the hands of Pezare to the prejudice of Montsoreau, whom the king loved for his great learning; but the queen cried out against him, saying that she bitterly detested him, for that he was in nowise courteous. Leufroid dismissed the Duke of Cataneo, his principal retainer, and installed Chevalier Pezare in his place. The Venetian paid no heed to his friend, the Frenchman. Thereupon, Gauttier burst forth, crying treachery and faithlessness to sacred friendship, and with the first word had at his service Cataneo and his friends, with whom he made a compact to overturn Pezare. No sooner was he firmly established in his office than the Venetian,

who was a shrewd man and most fitted to affairs of government,—the which is the peculiar province of the gentlemen of Venice,—performed marvellous things in Sicily, improved the harbors, invited merchants thither by privileges of his invention and by divers facilities for commerce, afforded great numbers of the poor a means of livelihood, attracted thither artisans of every trade,—forasmuch as great festivities abounded,—likewise the idle and the rich from all lands, even from the Orient. By this means were the crops, products of the earth, and other wares in much demand, ships and galleys came from Asia, the which caused the king to be much envied and the happiest king in all the Christian world, because, by reason of this state of things, his court was the most renowned in Europe.

This excellent political condition was brought about by the perfect accord of two men who understood each other well. One had charge of the pleasures of the court and was himself purveyor of joys to the queen, who appeared always with a cheerful face, because she was served *à la mode de Touraine*, and enlivened everything by the flame of her great happiness; then, too, he looked to it that the king lacked not pleasure, seeking new mistresses for him and leading him into innumerable diversions; and the king marvelled greatly at the complaisance of the queen, whom, since the advent of Monsieur de Montsoreau in that isle, he touched no more than a Jew touches pork. Thus occupied, the king and queen abandoned the care of their

realm to the other friend, who carried on the government, directed the establishments, managed the finances, holding the troops in leash, and all most wisely, knowing where all the money was, bringing it to the treasury, and preparing the great undertakings above mentioned.

This perfect accord endured three years, some say four, but the monks of Saint Benedict did not discover this date, which remains as obscure as the cause of the falling-out of the two friends. In all likelihood, the Venetian had the ambition to reign without any manner of control or contest and remembered not the services rendered by the Frenchman. Thus do they who frequent courts conduct themselves, for, according to a saying of Messire Aristotle in his works, the thing that grows old most quickly is a favor done, although extinct love is sometimes very stale. And so, confiding in the perfect friendship of Leufroid, who called him his gossip and would have clothed him in his shirt, if he had chosen, the Venetian conceived the design of ridding himself of his friend by betraying to the king the secret of his cuckoldry, and disclosing to him how the queen's happiness was fashioned, doubting not that Leufroid would begin by slicing off Monsieur de Montsoreau's head, according to a practice in vogue in Sicily in such cases. By this means would honest Pezare have to himself all the shekels which he and Gauttier sent in secret to the house of a Lombard at Genoa, which shekels were theirs in common because of their fraternal compact.

This treasure increased rapidly on the one side by gifts from the queen, who dealt most magnificently with Monsieur de Montsoreau, having vast domains of her own in Spain and some by inheritance in Italy; and on the other side, by the rewards bestowed by the king on his excellent minister, to whom he granted some rights over the merchants and other petty tolls.

The perfidious friend, having determined to perpetrate the crime, took care to aim his blow fair at Gauttier's heart, for the Tourangean was a man to sell his life most dearly. And so, on a certain night when Pezare knew that the queen lay with her lover, who loved her as if every night were the first night of wedlock, so cunning was she in the business, the traitor promised the king that he would afford him proof of the fact by means of a hole bored in a door of the Spanish lady's wardrobe, who feigned always to be at death's door. The better to see, Pezare waited until sunrise. The Spanish lady, who had a light foot, a sharp eye, and a mouth to feel the bit, heard footsteps, raised her head, and spied the king, followed by the Venetian, through a chink in the wall of the closet where she slept on those nights when the queen had her lover between two sheets, the which is the best way to have a lover. She hastened to warn the couple of this treachery. But the king already had his eye at the accursed hole. Leufroid saw—what? the beauteous and divine lantern which doth burn so much oil and light the world, a lantern adorned with

the most magnificent fringes, and which burns with a bright flame, which he found more attractive than all others because he had lost it from sight so long that it seemed new to him; but the hole forbade him to see aught else save a man's hand, which modestly closed that lantern, and he heard Montsoreau's voice saying: "How is my little pet this morning?"—A playful question, of the sort that lovers ask jestingly, for that this lantern is, in very truth, in all lands, the sun of love, wherefore do they give it a thousand pretty names, comparing it to the most beauteous things, as my pomegranate, my rose, my shell, my porcupine, my gulf of love, my treasure, my master, my little darling; and some dare most heretically to say: my god! Ask two or three, I pray you, if you believe not.

At this juncture, the lady, by a sign, informed them that the king was there.

"Doth he listen?" said the queen.

"Yes."

"Doth he see?"

"Yes."

"Who hath brought him?"

"Pezare."

"Summon the surgeon, and conceal Gauttier in his own room," said the queen.

In less time than a poor man would have taken to tell his tale of woe, the queen swathed the lantern in cloths and colored ointments, so that you would have believed that there was a shocking sore there and painful inflammation. When the king,

enraged by that query, burst in the door, he found the queen stretched on the bed in the same spot where he had seen her through the hole, and the surgeon, with nose and hand over the lantern swathed in bandages, saying: "How is my little pet this morning?" in the same voice that the king had heard. A most jocose and diverting query, for physicians and surgeons use soft words with the ladies, and, in treating that luminous flower, use flowers of speech. That sight made the king as sheepish as a fox caught in the trap. The queen sat up, flushing hotly with shame, and crying out to know what man had dared to come at that hour; but, seeing the king, spake thus to him:

"Ah! my lord, you discover that which I was careful to conceal from you, namely: that I am so inefficiently served by you that I am afflicted with a burning ailment, whereof I dare not complain, from a sense of dignity, but which requires secret dressings intended to stay the eager outflow of the vital essences. To safeguard my honor and yours, I am constrained to come to my dear Donna Miraflor, who gives me aid and comfort in my sufferings."

Thereupon, the surgeon delivered to Leufroid a discourse larded with Latin quotations, selected like precious seeds from Hippocrates, Galen, the school of Salerno and others, wherein he pointed out to him how serious a matter in woman was the lying fallow of the field of Venus, and that there was danger of death with queens of Spanish temperament, whose blood was most amorous. He put

forth these arguments with great solemnity, holding his beard straight and talking at great length, designing to give Monsieur de Montsoreau time to bestow himself in his bed. Then did the queen seize upon the same text to preach to the king a sermon a cubit long, and asked for his arm, on the pretext of sparing the poor invalid, who commonly attended her to avoid calumny. And when they were in the gallery where Monsieur de Montsoreau lodged, the queen said jestingly:

"You should play some diverting trick upon this Frenchman, who, I will wager, is with some lady and not in his own apartments. All they of the court circle dote upon him, and there will be quarrels over him some day. If you had followed my advice, he would have been far from Sicily ere now."

Leufroid abruptly entered Gauttier's chamber, whom he found in a deep slumber, and snoring like a monk in the choir. The queen returned with the king, whom she retained in her apartments, and secretly bade one of the guard summon the nobleman whose post Pezare held. While she was cajoling the king during breakfast, that lord having come into the room adjoining, she led him aside and said to him:

"Erect a gallows on a bastion; go and seize Signor Pezare and so arrange matters that he be hanged incontinently, giving him no leisure to write a word nor speak to any person. Such is our good pleasure and supreme command."

Cataneo made no comment. While Chevalier Pezare was thinking that his friend Gauttier would of a surety find himself minus his head, there came Duke Cataneo, who seized him and led him to the bastion, whence he saw at the queen's window Monsieur de Montsoreau in company with the king, the queen, and courtiers, and thereupon considered that he who entertained the queen was better equipped than he who ruled the king.

"My dear," said the queen to her spouse, leading him to the window, "yonder is a traitor who plotted to take from you the dearest of your treasures; hereof I will give you the proofs when you have the leisure to examine them."

Montsoreau, seeing the preparations for the supreme penalty, threw himself at the king's feet to implore his pardon, who was his mortal enemy, whereat the king was deeply moved.

"Sire de Montsoreau," said the queen, turning upon him an angry face, "are you so bold as to oppose the execution of our good pleasure?"

"You are a noble knight," said the king, raising Monsieur de Montsoreau, "but you know not how false a friend the Venetian was to you."

Pezare was very deftly strangled between the head and shoulders, inasmuch as the queen demonstrated his treachery to the king, establishing by the declarations of a Lombard of the city, the vast amount of the sums which Pezare had in the bank of Genoa, and which were abandoned to Montsoreau.

This lovely and noble queen died in the manner writ in the history of Sicily, to wit: as the result of a laborious lying-in, whereby she brought forth a son who was as great a man as he was unfortunate in his undertakings. The king believed, on the assurance of the surgeon, that the evils caused by the blood in that labor proceeded from the queen's too chaste life, and, attributing that virtuous queen's death to himself as a crime, did penance therefor and founded the Church of the Madonna, which is one of the finest in Palermo.

Monsieur de Montsoreau, witnessing the king's grief, said to him that when a king took unto himself a queen out of Spain, he should know that that queen required to be treated more generously than any other, for that the Spanish women were so ardent that one of them counted as ten women, and that if he would have a wife in order to show her simply, he should take her from the north of Germany, where the women are cold. The worthy chevalier returned to Touraine overladen with riches, and lived there to a great age, holding his peace touching his good fortune in Sicily. He returned thither to assist the king's son in his first attempt upon Naples, and left Italy when that charming prince was slain, as hath been told in the Chronicle.

In addition to the exalted morals contained in the rubric of this Tale, wherein it is said that Fortune, being of the feminine gender, arrays herself always on the side of the women, and that men are well advised to serve them well, it proves to us that in

silence is nine-tenths of wisdom. Nathless, the monkish author of this narrative inclined to deduce therefrom this other teaching, no less learned, that self-interest, which makes so many friendships, doth likewise unmake them. But you will choose from these three versions that one which accords with your understanding and necessities of the moment.

OF A PAUPER WHO WAS CALLED THE OLD MAN OF THE ROADS

The ancient chronicler, who hath furnished the flax to weave this present tale, saith that he was of the time when the fact occurred in the city of Rouen, which city hath set it down in its records. In the outskirts of that fair city, where, at that time, dwelt Duc Richard, there was a beggar whose true name was Tryballot, but upon whom was bestowed the sobriquet of the *Vieux-par-chemins*,—Old Man of the Roads,—not because he was as parched and yellow as vellum, but because he was always to be seen on the roads and by-paths, mountains and valleys, lay under the roof of the sky, and was dressed like a pauper. This notwithstanding, he was much beloved in the duchy, where one and all had become wonted to him, so that, if the month passed by without his having come to hold his bowl, people would say: "Where is the old man?" And the answer would be: "On the roads."

The said beggar had for father one Tryballot, who was, in his lifetime, a prudent man, thrifty and so orderly of habit that he left much wealth to his said son. But the young man speedily wasted it all in

debauchery, forasmuch as he did contrarily to the goodman, who, returning from the fields to his house, would pick up many a bush or billet of wood dropped at the right or left, saying in all conscience that one should never come home empty-handed. By this means did he keep himself warm in winter at the cost of the heedless, and did well. All recognized how excellent an example he was to the province, for, during a year before his death, one and all ceased to leave wood along the roads; he had forced the most wasteful to be thrifty and orderly. But his son feasted sumptuously and followed not these sage examples. His father had predicted the event. In this boy's early youth, when goodman Tryballot set him to watch for the birds which came to eat the peas and beans and other grains, that he might drive the thieves away, more especially the jays, which befouled everything, he would study them and take delight in remarking how gracefully they flew hither and thither, went away laden and returned, watching with a brisk eye the snares or nets spread for them, and would laugh heartily, seeing their skill in avoiding them. Then would Père Tryballot wax wroth on finding two and often three good bushels lacking in the measure. But, although he pulled his son's ears when he caught him idling under a hazel-tree, the rascal would always return to marvel at and study the industry of the blackbirds, sparrows, and other knowing pillagers. One day, his father said to him that he would do wisely to model himself upon

them, forasmuch as, if he continued his present mode of life, he would have no choice in his old age but to pillage like them, and like them would be hunted by the officers of the law. The which was true, seeing that, as hath been said, he squandered in a few days the crowns his thrifty father had gained during his life: he did with men as with the sparrows, allowing everyone to plunge a hand in his bag, and observing with what grace and pleasant manners they asked leave to draw upon it. By this means, he soon saw the end. When the devil was alone in the bag, Tryballot seemed in nowise anxious, saying that he did not choose to damn himself for the treasures of this world, and had studied philosophy in the school of the birds.

After he had enjoyed himself most abundantly, there remained of all his worldly goods naught save a goblet purchased at Landict and three dice, an equipment all-sufficient for drinking and dicing, and, furthermore, he could go about unencumbered by furniture, as are the great, who cannot travel without carriages, carpets, frying-pans, and an infinite number of varlets. Tryballot would fain have seen his good friends, but no longer fell in with any of his acquaintance, the which gave him leave to recognize no one. Which seeing, as hunger sharpened his teeth, he determined to adopt a profession wherein there would be nothing to do and much to earn. Reflecting thereon, he remembered the grace of the blackbirds and sparrows. And, thereupon, the honest Tryballot chose for his own the

trade of obtaining money at houses by pilfering it. On the first day, compassionate people gave him money, and Tryballot was content, deeming the trade a good one, without advances or unlucky chances, but, on the contrary, full of advantages. He plied his trade so cheerfully that he was welcomed everywhere, and received a thousand encouragements denied to the rich. The goodman watched the country people plant and sow and reap and harvest, and said to himself that they toiled diligently for him. He who had a pig in his pig-sty owed him a ham, albeit that keeper of swine suspected it not. Such a one who baked a loaf in his oven baked it for Tryballot and had no thought that it was so. He took nothing by force; on the contrary, people said pleasant things to him as they gave him alms:

"Take this, my Old Man of the Roads, and pluck up heart. Are you well? Look you! take this; the cat hath begun on it and you can finish it."

The Old Man of the Roads was at all the weddings, baptisms, and burials too, forasmuch as he went everywhere where there was joy and merry-making, openly or in secret. He observed religiously the statutes and ordinances of his trade, to wit: to do nothing, for, an he had worked ever so little, no one would have given him anything more. After stuffing himself to repletion, the wise man would stretch himself out by the roadside or against the pillar of a church and muse upon public affairs; in fine, he would philosophize like his gentle masters

the blackbirds, jays, and sparrows, and would think deeply as he lay there idle; for, because his garments were poor, was that a reason wherefore his understanding should not be rich? His philosophy did greatly divert his customers, to whom he would say, by way of thanks, the finest aphorisms of his learning. To hear him, the rich man's gout was produced by slippers: he boasted that he was light of foot because his cobbler gave him shoes that he sold by the ell. There were headaches beneath diadems, which did not afflict him, forasmuch as his head was oppressed neither by dull care nor by any covering. Furthermore, rings with precious stones impeded the movement of the blood. Although he overburdened himself with sores, according to the laws of mendicancy, be sure that he was more sound and healthy than a child brought to the font. The good man amused himself with other beggars playing with his three dice, which he retained as a means of spending his small change, in order to be always poor. Notwithstanding his vow, however, he was, like the Mendicant Orders, so well supplied with funds, that on a certain Easter Day, another beggar seeking to bargain with him for that day's gains, the Old Man of the Roads refused ten crowns therefor. And, in the evening, spent fourteen crowns in feasting the almoners, forasmuch as it is written in the statutes of mendicancy that one must show gratitude to them who give. Although he shunned with care all that caused care in other men, who, being overburdened with riches, go in quest of evil,

he was happier in having nothing in the world than when he had his father's crowns. And, with respect to the essential conditions of nobility, he was always in good trim to be ennobled, for he did naught save as his caprice bade him do, and lived nobly without toil. Thirty crowns would not have induced him to rise when he had gone to bed. He always lived until the morrow, like other men, leading that pleasant life, which, as Messire Plato saith, whose authority hath heretofore been invoked in these writings, divers sages of old were wont to lead. To conclude, the Old Man of the Roads attained the age of two-and-eighty years, having never passed a single day without obtaining money, and even then had the fairest complexion one can imagine. Wherefore he believed that, an he had continued in the path of riches, he should have ruined himself and would have been put underground long since. It is possible that he was right.

During his early youth, the Old Man of the Roads had had the excellent virtue of loving the ladies very dearly, and his abundance of love, it was said, was a fruit of his studies with the sparrows. So was he always disposed to lend the ladies his assistance in counting the beams, and this generosity found its physical reason herein, that, as he did nothing, he was always ready to do something. The washerwomen said that it was of no use for them to soap the ladies, for that the Old Man of the Roads was much more expert at it than they. His secret virtues gave birth, so it was said, to the favor he enjoyed in

the province. Some said that Madame de Caumont summoned him to her château to learn the truth touching those qualities, and hid him there during one whole week, with intent to prevent him from begging, but the old man made his escape by the hedges, in great dread of being rich. As he advanced in years, this great *quintessencer* found that he was disdained, albeit his notable faculties suffered no deterioration. This unjust gyration of the sex caused the old man's first affliction and the famous prosecution of Rouen, to which it is high time to come.

In that eighty-second year, the Old Man of the Roads was perforce continent about seven months, during which he fell in with no woman favorably disposed, and said before the judge that it was the greatest surprise of his long and honorable life. In that most pitiable plight, he saw in the fields, in the merry month of May, a maiden, who by chance was a virgin, and who was tending cows. The heat was so intense that this cowherd lay in the shade of a beech, with her face against the grass, after the fashion of them who work in the fields, to take a nap the while her cattle chewed their cud, and was awakened by the act of the old man, who had stolen that which a poor wench can give but once. Finding herself undone without warning or enjoyment, she cried so loud that the men working in the fields came up and were called to witness by the wench, at the moment when the havoc wrought on the wedding-night in a newly-made bride was

plainly visible in her; she wept and lamented, saying that that incontinent old ape might have outraged her mother, who would have said nothing. The old man made answer to the countryfolk, who were already brandishing their reaping-hooks to slay him, that he had been driven to divert himself. Those men objected, and with justice, that a man might well divert himself without forcing a virgin—a matter for the provost, which would lead him straight to the gallows; and he was hurried with much tumult to the gaol at Rouen.

The maid, being questioned by the provost, declared that she had fallen asleep for something to do, and that she had dreamed of her lover, with whom she was at odds, because he desired to take the measure of his task before marriage; and, toying with him in that dream, allowed him to see if things were well arranged, to the end that no evil might befall either of them; and, despite her prohibition, he went farther than she gave him leave to go, and, finding therein more pain than pleasure, she had awakened under the power of the Old Man of the Roads, who had thrown himself upon her like a monk on a ham at the end of Lent.

This case caused so great excitement in the town of Rouen, that the provost was summoned by monseigneur le duc, to whom there came a most vehement desire to know if the fact was true. On the provost's affirmation, he ordered that the Old Man of the Roads should be brought to his palace, to the end that he might hear what defence he could

make. The poor man appeared before the prince, and ingenuously told him of the ill-fortune that had befallen him through the force and desire of nature, saying that he was like unto a very stripling impelled by most imperious passions; that until that present year he had had women of his own, but that he had been fasting eight long months; that he was too poor to resort to harlots; that the honest women who were wont to bestow that alms upon him had conceived a holy horror of his hair, which had had the villainy to turn white despite the verdancy of his love, and that he had been constrained to grasp at pleasure where it was offered him by the sight of that damned virgin, who, as she lay beneath the tree, had let him see the pretty lining of her gown and two hemispheres white as snow, which had taken away his reason; that the fault was the girl's, not his, for that virgins should be forbidden to tempt passers-by by showing them that to which the name Venus *Callipygis* is due; and, lastly, the prince himself must know how great difficulty a man hath to hold his dog in leash at high noon, for that it was at that hour that King David was smitten by the wife of Monsieur Uriah; that where a Hebrew king beloved of God had fallen, a poor devil bereft of pleasure and reduced to pilfering his livelihood might well have found himself at fault; and that he would be content to sing psalms the remainder of his days, accompanying himself upon a lute, by way of penance, in imitation of the said king, who had committed the grievous sin of

slaying a husband, where he had but inflicted trifling damage on a country wench.

The duke did much relish the goodman's arguments, and said that he was a good *c*——. Then did he pronounce this memorable sentence, that if, as the said beggar averred, he had so great need of pleasure at his age, he would give him leave to demonstrate it at the foot of the ladder which he must ascend to be hanged, to which fate had the provost summarily condemned him; and if, with the rope about his neck, standing between the priest and the hangman, such a desire should incite him, he should have his pardon.

This sentence being published, there was a great crowd, wild to see the goodman taken to the gallows. There was a double row, as at the entry of a duke, and therein were to be seen more bonnets than hats. The Old Man of the Roads was saved by a lady very curious to see how this most precious lecher would end, who said to the duke that religion commanded that the goodman should have fair play, and arrayed herself as if for a dancing party; she placed in evidence, and with design, two globes of quivering flesh, so white that the fine linen of her neckerchief seemed pale by contrast; in truth, those beauteous fruits of love appeared without a fold above her bodice, like two great apples, and made the mouth water, so delicate were they. This noble lady, who was of those who make all men feel their manhood at sight of them, summoned to her lips a smile for the goodman. The Old Man of

the Roads, clad in a blouse of coarse cotton, more certain to be in a posture to commit rape after the hanging than before, came on between the officers of the law, exceeding sad, casting an eye on this side and on that, without seeing aught save head-gear; and would, he said, have given a hundred crowns for a maid furnished like the cowherd whose great white columns of Venus he remembered, which had undone him and which might even now save his life; but, as he was old, the memory was not green enough. But when, at the ladder's foot, he spied the lady's two treasures, and the pretty delta formed by their rounded outlines, his Master Jean Chouart was in such a state of frenzy that the blouse spake very plainly by a great uprising.

"Prithee, verify the fact straightway," he said to the officers; "I have earned my pardon, but I will not answer for the knave."

The lady was much gratified by this homage, the which, she said, was much more marvellous than the rape. The officers whose duty it was to lift the blouse believed that that old man was the devil, for never in their Scriptures had they fallen in with an I so straight as the good man's posture. Therefore was he escorted in triumph through the town to the duke's palace, to whom the officers and others bore witness of the fact. In those ignorant days, this judicial instrumentation was held in such high honor that the town voted to erect a pillar on the spot where the goodman had earned his pardon, and thereon was he portrayed in stone even as he was at sight of that

kindly and virtuous dame. The statue was still standing in the days when the town of Rouen was taken by the English, and the authors of the time all set down this tale among the notable events of the reign.

Inasmuch as it was offered by the town to supply wenches to the old man and to provide him with bed, board, and clothing, the good duke arranged the affair by bestowing a thousand crowns on the wronged maid and marrying her to the good man, who lost thereby his name of Old Man of the Roads. He was named by the duke Sieur de Bonne-C——. His wife lay in after nine months with a boy perfectly formed and full of life, who was born with two teeth. From this marriage came the family of Bonne-C——, which, from a sense of shame, and most unwisely, petitioned our well-beloved King Louis the Eleventh for letters patent to change its name to Bonne-Chose. Whereupon good King Louis pointed out to Monsieur de Bonne-C—— that there was in the State of Venice an illustrious family of *Coglioni*, who bore three C——'s *au naturel* on their crest. My said Sieurs de Bonne-C—— declared to the king that their wives were greatly ashamed to be thus named in company; the king rejoined that they would lose much by the change, for that things went with names. But this notwithstanding, he granted the letters. Thereafter that family was known by that name and extended into several provinces. The first Sieur de Bonne-C—— lived twenty-seven years and had another son and two daughters. But he

was much grieved to end his days a rich man, and no longer to beg on the roads.

From this tale, you will draw one of the noblest lessons and most substantial morals of all the tales you will read in your life, always excepting, be it understood, these hundred glorious Droll Tales. To wit: that never would an adventure of this stripe have happened to the emasculated and wasted natures of the court vagabonds, rich men and others who dig their graves with their teeth, eating beyond measure and drinking an abundance of wine which ruins their instruments of joy, the which fat-bellied folk bleat upon costly stuffs and feather-beds, while Sieur de Bonne-Chose lay on the hard ground. Under such circumstances, had they but eaten cabbages, they would have become rotten. This may incite certain of them who read this tale to change their mode of life, to the end that they may imitate the Old Man of the Roads in his old age.

THE STRANGE SAYINGS OF THREE PILGRIMS

When the Pope quitted his good city of Avignon to dwell in Rome, there was much merriment concerning divers pilgrims who had set out for the Comtat, and must now cross the high Alps in order to reach the said city of Rome, whither they journeyed to seek absolution for strange sins. Then were seen, on high-roads and in hostelries, they who wore the collar of the Order of the Brethren of Cain, otherwise called the flower of the penitent, wicked fellows all, burdened with corrupt souls which thirsted to bathe themselves in the papal pool and carried gold or things of great price to redeem their evil deeds, pay for bulls, and bestow gifts upon the saints. Be sure that they who drank water on their way thither, on returning, if the tavern-keepers gave them water, demanded holy water from the cellar.

About this time, three pilgrims came to the said city of Avignon to their discomfiture, inasmuch as the Pope had departed. When they crossed the Rhone, to reach the Mediterranean shore, one of the three pilgrims, who led in leash his son, a boy of ten years at the most, parted company with the

others; but, near the city of Milan, this fellow suddenly reappeared, without the boy. Then, at the vesper hour and at supper, did they feast right royally to celebrate the return of the pilgrim, whom they believed to have conceived a distaste for doing penance, for lack of a pope in Avignon. Of these three Rome-seekers, one had journeyed from Paris, another from Germany, and the third, who doubtless wished to afford his son instruction by that journey, had come from the Duchy of Bourgogne, where he held divers fiefs and was a younger son of the family of Villers-la-Faye,—Villa in Fago,—by name La Vaugrenand. The German baron had fallen in with the bourgeois from Paris beyond Lyon; and both had accosted Monsieur de la Vaugrenand in sight of Avignon.

In this hostelry, then, the three pilgrims gave free play to their tongues and agreed to travel to Rome in company, to the end that they might the better hold their ground against highwaymen, birds of night, and other knights of the road, whose trade it was to disburden pilgrims of that which weighed upon their bodies, before the Pope relieved them of that which weighed upon their consciences. After drinking, the three comrades talked, inasmuch as the glass is the key of speech, and one and all avowed that the cause of their departure was a woman's charms. The maid-servant, who watched them as they drank, remarked that of every hundred pilgrims who lodged in that inn, ninety-nine were on their way to Rome for the same cause.

Thereupon, these three sages considered how pernicious woman was to man. The baron showed the heavy golden chain he carried in his wallet to bestow upon Saint Peter, and said that his case was so grave that he could not rid himself of blame with the worth of ten such chains. The Parisian removed his glove and brought to light a ring with a white diamond, saying that he carried to the Pope a hundred times as much. The Bourguignon removed his cap and showed two pearls of wondrous beauty, which were magnificent pendants for the ears of Notre-Dame de Lorette, and avowed that he would have preferred to leave them on his wife's neck.

Thereupon, the servant exclaimed that their sins must needs have been as great as those of the Visconti.

To which the pilgrims made answer that they were such that they had one and all made a vow never to go wenching more during the remainder of their lives, however fair the women, and this in addition to the penance which should be imposed upon them by the Pope.

The servant marvelled much that they should all have made the same vow. The Bourguignon added that that vow had been the cause of his lagging behind after their arrival at Avignon, for that he had been in great dread lest his son, despite his tender years, might go astray, and that he had sworn an oath to keep man and beast from wenching in his house and on his estates. The baron

having made inquiry touching the adventure, the pilgrim told them the story in these words:

"You know that the good Comtesse Jeanne d'Avignon long ago issued an edict concerning harlots, whom she required to dwell in a faubourg, in bawdy-houses with shutters painted red and closed. Now, passing in your company through that damned faubourg, my boy observed the said houses with shutters painted red and tightly closed, and, his curiosity being roused,—for you know that these little devils of ten years have an eye for everything,—he pulled me by the sleeve and ceased not to pull me until he had learned from me what those said houses were. Then, to have done with it, I told him that young boys had naught to do in those places, and must not enter under pain of death, for that those were the places where men and women were made, and that for him who knew not the process the danger was so great that, if a novice went within, flying crabs and other savage beasts would jump into his face. Fear seized the boy, who followed me to the inn much moved, nor dared to cast his eye on the said brothels. While I was in the stable, looking to the stabling of the horses, my boy decamped like a thief, and the servant could not tell me where he was. Then was I in great dread of the harlots, but had confidence in the ordinances which forbade such children to be admitted. At supper, the rascal returned, no more shamefaced than our divine Saviour in the Temple among the doctors.

"'Whence do you come?' I asked him.

"'From the houses with red shutters,' said he.

"'Little ne'er-do-well,' said I, 'I will e'en give you the lash.'

"Thereupon, he began to whine and cry. I told him that if he would confess what had happened to him I would remit the bodily chastisement.

"'Oh!' said he, 'I took good care not to enter, because of the flying crabs and savage beasts, and I stood by the windows so that I might see how men are made.'

"'And what saw you?' I said.

"'I saw,' said he, 'a beautiful woman just being finished, for she lacked only a single peg which a young workman drove in with great zeal. No sooner was she made than she turned over, spake, and kissed her manufacturer.'

"'Eat your supper,' said I.

"And during the night I returned to Bourgogne and left him with his mother, in great fear, lest at the first town he should choose to drive his peg into some girl."

"These children often make such retorts," said the Parisian. "My neighbor's child disclosed his father's cuckoldry in this wise: One night, I said to him, to learn if he was well taught at school in religious matters: 'What is Hope?'—'A big crossbowman of the king's company, who comes here when my father goes away,' said he. And, in fact, the sergeant of the king's crossbowmen was nicknamed Hope by his comrades. The neighbor was

shamefaced at that reply, and, albeit he glanced in the mirror to keep himself in countenance, he could not see his horns."

The baron observed that the boy's answer was most apt in this: that, in very truth, Hope is a wench who comes to bed to us when the realities of life fail us.

"Is a cuckold made after God's image?" said the Bourguignon.

"No," said the Parisian, "forasmuch as God is wise herein, that He hath taken no wife; therefore is He blessed for all eternity."

"But," said the servant, "cuckolds are made in the image of God before their horns are planted."

Whereupon the three pilgrims cursed all women, saying that to them all the ills of the world were due.

"Their mazes are as empty as helmets," said the Bourguignon.

"Their hearts are as crooked as bill-hooks," said the Parisian.

"Why do we see so many male pilgrims and so few female ones?" said the German baron.

"Their damned charm sins not," replied the Parisian. "The charm knows neither father nor mother, nor the commandments of God nor those of the Church, nor laws divine, nor laws human; the charm knows no doctrine, understands no heresies, cannot be reprobated; it is innocent of everything and laughs always, its understanding is *nil*, and therefore do I hold it in horror and profound detestation."

"And I likewise," said the Bourguignon, "and I begin to appreciate the variant reading suggested by a certain scholar of those verses of the Bible wherein is an account of the Creation. In this commentary, which we call a *Noël* in our province, lies the cause of the imperfection of the charm of woman, whereof, contrarily to the female of other species, no man can quench the thirst, so much infernal ardor is contained therein. In this *Noël* it is said that, the Lord God having turned His head away to look at an ass, which brayed for the first time in His paradise, while He was fashioning Eve, the devil seized the opportunity to push his finger into that too perfect creature and made a burning sore, which the Lord took heed to close with a stitch: whence virgins. By means of this stitch, woman was to remain closed, and children to be fashioned after the manner wherein the Lord had made the angels, by a joy as much above mere carnal joy as heaven was above the earth. Perceiving this closure, the devil, wroth at being cheated, pulled the skin of Sieur Adam, who was sleeping, and stretched it in imitation of his diabolic tail; but, forasmuch as the father of men lay on his back, this protuberance was in front. Thereupon, those two devilish contrivances conceived the passion to unite by the law of similitudes, which God had laid down for the conduct of his worlds. Thence came the first sin and the sorrows of the human race, for God, seeing the devil's work, desired to learn what would come of it."

Thereupon, the servant said that there was much

reason in their sayings, for that woman was a vile creature, and that she knew some women whom she would like better under ground than in the fields. The pilgrims, remarking that the girl was fair, feared lest they might break their vows, and went straightway to bed. The girl went to her mistress, and said to her that she was entertaining unbelievers, and repeated to her their sayings touching womankind.

"Oho!" said the hostess, "little care I for the ideas my customers have in their brains, provided their pockets are well supplied."

But, when the servant spoke of the jewels, "Here is something which concerns all women," said she, deeply moved. "Let us go and reason with them; I take the nobles, and I give thee the bourgeois."

The hostess, who was the most wanton bourgeoise in the Duchy of Milan, hied her to the chamber where Sieur de la Vaugrenand and the German baron lay and proffered them her compliments upon their vows, observing that the women lost no great things thereby; but, in order to fulfil their sad vows, they must needs be assured that they would resist the most trifling of temptations. Wherefore she offered to lie with them, so curious she was to see if she would be left untouched, the which had never befallen her in any bed wherein she had had the company of a man.

On the morrow, at breakfast, the servant had the ring on her finger, the mistress had the gold chain about her neck and the pearls at her ears. The

three pilgrims remained in the said city about a month, spent there the money that they carried in their pockets, and agreed that, if they had uttered such blasphemy against women, it was because they had had no experience of the Milanese.

On his return to Germany, the baron made the remark that he was guilty of but one sin, and that was the being in his own château. The Parisian bourgeois returned with many small wares and found his bourgeoise with Hope. The Bourguignon gentleman found Madame de la Vaugrenand so depressed that he was nigh dying of the consolation he afforded her, despite his avowed opinions.

This proves that we should hold our peace in hostelries.

INNOCENCE

By the double red crest of my chanticleer and by the pink lining of my love's black slipper! by all the horns of well-beloved cuckolds and by the virtue of their sacrosanct wives! the most beauteous work that men produce is neither poems nor painted canvases, nor music, nor châteaux, nor statues, howsoever well carved they be, nor galleys with sails or oars, but children. Children below the age of ten, be it understood, for afterward they become men and women, and, acquiring knowledge, are not worth all that they have cost: the worst are the best. Watch them playing artlessly with everything, with shoes, especially the laced ones, with household utensils, laying aside what they like not, crying after what they like, plundering all the sweetmeats and preserves in the house, nibbling the reserve stores, and always laughing when their teeth have grown, and you will agree that they are delicious in every respect, besides that they are flower and fruit, the fruit of love and the flower of life. Thus, so long as their understanding is not disturbed by the commotions of life, there is nothing in this world more diverting or more blessed than their sayings, which carry off the palm for ingenuousness. This is as true as the double stomach

of an ox. Never will you hear a man speak ingenuously after the manner of children, inasmuch as there is in a man's ingenuousness an indefinable flavor of reason, whereas that of children is innocent and spotless and reflects the finesse of the mother, the which is plainly manifest in this tale.

Queen Catherine was at this time dauphiness, and to curry favor with the king, her father-in-law, who was then in sore straits, gave him from time to time Italian pictures, knowing that he esteemed them highly, being the friend of Raphael d'Urbino, and of Messieurs Primaticcio and Leonardo da Vinci, to whom he sent large sums. Wherefore she obtained from her family, which possessed the flower of their works,—for the Duke of Medicis reigned then in Tuscany,—a priceless canvas painted by a Venetian, Titian by name, painter to the Emperor Charles and much in vogue, whereon he had portrayed Adam and Eve at the moment when God left them to converse together in the terrestrial paradise; and they were of life-size in the costumes of their time, concerning which it were difficult to go astray, forasmuch as they were clad in their ignorance and adorned by the grace divine which enveloped them—difficult things to paint because of the color, wherein my said Sieur Titian had excelled. The picture was placed in the poor king's chamber, who was then suffering grievously with the disease whereof he died.

This painting achieved a great triumph at the court of France, where everyone desired to see it;

but no one was permitted so to do before the death of the king, since, by his desire, the said picture was left in his chamber as long as he lived.

One day, Madame Catherine led to the king's chamber her son François and little Margot, who began to chatter aimlessly as all children do. On this side and on that, these children had heard people speak of this picture of Adam and Eve, and had tormented their mother to persuade her to take them thither. And as the little ones sometimes diverted the old king, madame la dauphine took them to his chamber.

"You wished to see Adam and Eve, who are our first parents," she said; "here they are."

Then did she leave them standing in great admiration before Sieur Titian's picture, and took her seat by the king's pillow, who took pleasure in watching the children.

"Which of the two is Adam?" said François, touching his sister Marguerite's elbow.

"I know not," replied the little maid; "to know that, they would have to be dressed."

This reply, which delighted the poor king and the mother, was set down in a letter writ to Florence by Queen Catherine.

Inasmuch as no writer hath ever brought it forth into the light, it shall abide like a flower in a corner of these tales, albeit it is in nowise droll, and there is no other lesson to be drawn therefrom than that, if one would hear this pretty childish prattle, he must needs make children.

THE FAIR IMPERIA MARRIED

I

HOW MADAME IMPERIA WAS CAUGHT IN THE NETS SHE WAS ACCUSTOMED TO SPREAD FOR HER LOVE-PIGEONS

The fair Madame Imperia, who doth gloriously open these said tales, forasmuch as she was the glory of her time, was constrained to visit the city of Rome after the holding of the Council, for the Cardinal of Ragusa loved her so dearly that he would have lost his berretta for her, and would fain keep her with him. This jack-a-dandy was so magnificent that he bestowed upon her the noble palace which she had in the said city of Rome. About this time, she had the misfortune to be got with child by this cardinal. As all know, this pregnancy resulted in a lovely girl, of whom the Pope said jestingly that she must needs be named Théodore, as who should say, *gift from God*. The girl was so named, and was beautiful to admiration. The cardinal left his heritage to Madame Théodore, whom the fair Imperia installed in her palace, inasmuch as she herself fled from that city of Rome as from a pernicious spot where children were made, where she had come nigh to spoiling her amorous figure

and her illustrious charms, outlines of the body, curves of the back, beauteous surfaces, serpentine motions, which raised her as far above all other women in Christendom as the Holy Father is above other Christians. But all her lovers knew that by the aid of eleven doctors from Padua, seven surgeons from Pavia, and five from all other parts, who attended her in her lying-in, she was saved from all injury. Some said that she had gained thereby in delicacy and fairness of complexion. An illustrious professor of the school of Salerno wrote a book thereon to demonstrate the opportunities of a lying-in to preserve the health, freshness, and beauty of ladies. In this very learned book, it was made clear to readers that that which was most fair to see in Madame Imperia was that which none but her lovers were allowed to see: a rare case, inasmuch as she would not disrobe for the petty princes of Germany, whom she called her margraves, burgraves, electors, and dukes, as a captain speaks of his soldiers.

Everyone knows, furthermore, that, having attained the age of eighteen, the fair Théodore, in order to atone for her mother's wild life, determined to take the veil, bequeathing all her worldly goods to the convent of the Clairists. With that intent she addressed herself to a cardinal, who prepared her to take her vows. This unfaithful shepherd found his lamb so superbly beautiful, that he tried to force her. Thereupon, La Théodore slew herself with a stiletto, in order not to be polluted by the said

priest. This adventure, set forth in the chronicles of the time, caused much dismay in the said city of Rome, and was deplored by all, so dearly loved was Madame Imperia's daughter.

Thereupon, that noble-hearted, grief-stricken courtesan returned to the city of Rome to weep for her poor daughter; she arrived there in the thirty-ninth year of her age, which was, according to the authors of the time, the most verdant season of her magnificent beauty, since everything about her was then at the acme of perfection, as in a ripe fruit. Grief made her most majestic and most crusty to them who spake to her of love with intent to dry her tears. The Pope himself came to her palace to bestow upon her some words of admonition. But she remained in mourning, saying that she would give herself to God, inasmuch as she had never been satisfied with any man, although she had seen many a one; for all, even a little priest whom she had once adored like a blessed shrine, had deceived her, whereas God would not deceive her. This resolution made everyone tremble, for she was the joy of an infinite number of nobles. And so people accosted one another in the streets of Rome, saying: "Where is Madame Imperia? is it her purpose to strip the world bare of love?"— Divers ambassadors wrote to their masters. The Emperor of the Romans was much distressed, for that he had made merry with Madame Imperia, like a madman, for eleven weeks, had left her only to go to war, and still loved her like his most precious

member, which to him, despite the opinion of his courtiers, was the eye, since that, as he was wont to say, embraced the whole of his dear Imperia.

In this extremity, the Pope summoned a Spanish physician and took him to the fair Imperia, to whom he showed most adroitly, by arguments deduced from Greek and Latin authors and adorned with quotations, that beauty was impaired by so much weeping and distress, and that wrinkles entered through the door of grief. This proposition, confirmed by the controversial doctors of the Sacred College, had for a result that the palace was thrown open on the evening of that day. The young cardinals, the envoys from foreign countries, they who had great wealth, and the principal personages of that city of Rome, came thither, filled the vast halls, and held high carnival; the common people lighted bonfires; by this means did one and all unite in celebrating the return of the queen of pleasures to her work, for she was in those days the sovereign of love. The artisans of every trade were much attached to her, for that she spent great sums to build a church in said city, where could be seen the tomb of Théodore, the which was destroyed in the sack of Rome when the perfidious Constable of Bourbon lost his life; for the saintly maid was placed in a casket of solid silver, which the damned troopers were determined to have. This monument cost, it was said, more than the Pyramid erected long ago by Rhodepa, the Egyptian courtesan, eighteen hundred years before the coming of

our divine Saviour, which fact doth bear witness to the antiquity of that pleasing profession, how dearly the wise Egyptians paid for their pleasures, and how everything diminishes in value, inasmuch as for a trifle you can have to-day a shift full of white flesh on Rue du Petit-Heuleu, Paris. Is it not an abomination?

Never did Madame Imperia appear so beautiful as during that first fête after her mourning. All the princes, cardinals, and others averred that she was worthy of the homage of the whole world, the which was represented beneath her roof by one great lord at least from all known lands, and thereby was it amply demonstrated that beauty was in all places queen of all things. The envoy of the King of France, who was a younger son of the family of Isle-Adam, came somewhat late, albeit he had never seen Madame Imperia, and was most curious to see her. He was a comely young chevalier, who had much pleased the King of France, in whose court he had a darling whom he loved with infinite affection, the daughter of Monsieur de Montmorency, a nobleman whose domains lay side by side with those of the house of Isle-Adam. To this younger son, entirely penniless, the king had entrusted certain missions in the Duchy of Milan, whereof he had acquitted himself so shrewdly, that therefor he had been sent to Rome to carry forward the momentous negotiations which the historians have amply narrated in their books of history. Now, albeit he had nothing of his own, the poor cadet of Isle-Adam

placed his trust in so auspicious an opening. He was of middle height, straight as a column, dark, with black eyes which beamed like the sun, and the beard of an old legate to whom one can sell nothing; but, over and above his shrewdness, he had an air of childish artlessness, the which made him as sweet and lovable as a little laughing maid.

No sooner had this young gentleman made his appearance, and she spied him, than Madame Imperia felt the bite of a powerful caprice which seized the strings of her lute in a fierce grasp and caused it to give forth a note which she had not heard in a long while. And she was so drunken with true love at sight of that blooming youthfulness, that, but for her imperial majesty, she would have run to kiss those cheeks which shone like little apples. Now, know this: that women called prudes and ladies with crests upon their skirts are in everywise ignorant touching the nature of man, for that they cleave to a single one, like that Queen of France who thought that all men had an unpleasant odor because the king had; but a courtesan of high rank, as Madame Imperia was, knows man to the very core, for that she hath handled a great number of them. In her closet no one was more shamefaced than a dog that has commerce with his mother, and everyone showed himself as he was, saying to himself that he would not see her for long. Having often deplored this subjection, she said at times that she was much more a sufferer from pleasure than from pain. There was the cross of her life. Be

sure that a lover would often need as much gold as a mule can carry to pass the night in her bed, and even so the exquisite was often driven to cut his throat by a refusal. For her, therefore, it was a veritable joy to feel a youthful caprice like that which she had had for the little priest, whereof the tale stands at the head of these Tens; but, inasmuch as she was more advanced in years than in that merry time, so was love the more firmly established in her, and well she saw that it was of the nature of fire, inasmuch as it delayed not to make itself felt; in very truth, she smarted in her skin like a cat that one flays alive, and so keenly that she longed to pounce upon my gentleman and carry him off to her bed, as a kite does its prey; but restrained herself in her skirts, albeit with great difficulty.

When he came forward to pay his respects to her, she bridled up and arrayed herself in her most scarlet majesty, as those women do who have an overflow of love in their hearts. This gravity of demeanor toward the young ambassador being most noticeable, some thought that she had employment for him, giving a double meaning to the word, according to the fashion of the time. Isle-Adam, knowing that he was dearly loved by his sweetheart, paid little heed to Madame Imperia, grave or gay, and frisked about like an unleashed kid. The courtesan, much vexed thereat, imposed silence on her flutes: from sulky became gracious and frolicsome; went to him, softened her voice, sharpened

her glance, wagged her head, brushed against him with her sleeve, called him "Monseigneur," enlaced him with soft words, played with her fingers in his hand, and ended by smiling at him most graciously. He, not dreaming that so paltry a lover would attract her, inasmuch as he was penniless and knew not that his beauty was in her eyes worth all the treasures in the world, did not fall into her snares, but remained on his high horse, with arms akimbo. This disregard of her caprice vexed madame's heart, who by that spark was set on fire. If you doubt this, it is because you know not the real nature of Madame Imperia's trade, who, for that she had done it so much, might be compared to a chimney wherein had burned an endless number of joyous fires which had choked it with soot; in such condition a single match suffices to consume everything, where a hundred fagots have smoked at their ease. So did she burn within, from top to bottom, in a horrible way, and could not be extinguished save by the water of love.

The cadet of Isle-Adam took his leave, having discovered nothing of that ardor. Madame, in despair at his departure, lost her wits, from head to heels, and so entirely, that she sent in quest of him through the galleries, inviting him to lie with her. Be sure that never in her life had she been so cowardly, neither for king nor pope nor emperor, forasmuch as the great price of her body was due to the servitude wherein she held man, whom the more she abased the more she exalted herself. Then did

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her first tire-woman, who was a sly hussy, say to this disdainful swain that in all likelihood he would have a most agreeable experience, for madame would doubtless regale him with her most seductive devices of love.

Isle-Adam returned to the hall, well content with this lucky chance. When the French envoy reappeared, as everyone had seen how madame paled at his departure, there was an outburst of œcumenical delight, for that one and all were overjoyed to see her resume her pleasant life of love. An English cardinal, who had sniffed more than one round-bellied flagon and longed to taste the fair Imperia, went to Isle-Adam and said in his ear:

"Ply your distaff merrily, that she may never escape you."

The story of this night was told to the Pope at his morning reception, who said:

"*Lætamini, gentes, quoniam surrexit Dominus.*"

A quotation which the old cardinals abhorred as a profanation of the sacred texts. Which seeing, the Pope reproved them roundly, and seized the occasion to preach to them, saying that, even if they were good Christians, they were wretched politicians. In truth, he relied upon the fair Imperia to tame the emperor, and with that design heaped flatteries upon her.

The lights in the palace being extinguished, the gold flagons on the floor, the drunken guests asleep on the carpets, madame withdrew to the chamber where she slept, leading by the hand her dear chosen

friend, well content, and did confess thereafter that her passion was so intense that she was near lying on the floor like a beast of burden and bidding him crush her, if crush her he could. Isle-Adam put off his clothes and went to bed as if in his own house; which seeing, madame leaped to the platform, trampling upon her skirts, almost before they dropped, and rushed to his embrace with a brutality whereat her women marvelled greatly, who knew her as the most modest of women in her bed.

This amazement overspread the province, inasmuch as the lovers remained in bed for nine days, drinking, eating, and playing *cricquon cricquette* in a masterful and superlative fashion. Madame told her women that she had put her hand upon a very phœnix of love, for that he rose again after every blow. In Rome and in all Italy there was naught talked of save this victory over Imperia, who boasted that she yielded to no man and spat upon all, even upon dukes; for, so far as concerned the said burgraves and margraves, she gave them the train of her gown to hold, and said that, if she walked not upon them, they would walk upon her. Madame confessed to her tire-women that, contrarily to other men whom she had endured, the more she fondled this child of love, the more she longed to fondle him, and could never do without him, neither without his fine eyes which blinded her, nor without his branch of coral, for which she was always hungry and thirsty. She said likewise, that, an he so desired, she would e'en let him suck

her blood, devour her breasts, which were the loveliest in the whole world, and cut her hair, whereof she had given but a single strand to her dear Emperor of the Romans, who wore it about his neck as a precious relic; and, lastly, she confessed that not until that night did her real life begin, for that this Villiers de l'Isle-Adam excited her beyond measure in the act and sent the blood to her heart in three bounds during their commerce.

These words becoming known, made everyone exceeding sorrowful. At her first going out, Madame Imperia said to the Roman ladies that she should die a cruel death an she were abandoned by that gentleman and should be bitten by an asp or scorpion, like Queen Cleopatra; and she declared most firmly that she had bade an everlasting farewell to her wild fancies, and would show the whole world what virtue was, by abandoning her pleasant empire for this Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, whose servant she would rather be than reign over all Christendom. The English cardinal urged upon the Pope that it was an infamy and an abomination, this true love for a single man in the heart of a woman who was the joy of all, and that it was his duty to annul four times over, by a brief *in partibus*, this marriage, which was a fraud upon the fashionable world. But the love of this poor girl, who then confessed the past miseries of her life, was so sweet a thing and so stirred the entrails of even the most evil-minded wretch, that it put all tongues to silence, and one and all forgave her her happiness.

On a certain day in Lent, the fair Imperia caused her people to fast, bade them confess and return to God; then did she go and throw herself at the Pope's feet, and did penance there so zealously, that she obtained remission of all her sins, believing that the papal absolution would communicate to her heart the virginity which she much feared that she could not offer to her friend. We must needs believe that the ecclesiastical piscina had some virtue, inasmuch as the poor youth was encompassed by nets so cunningly laid, that he believed himself in heaven, and forgot the negotiations of the King of France, forgot his love for Mademoiselle de Montmorency, in fine, forgot everything to marry Madame Imperia, to the end that he might live and die with her. Such was the effect of the adroit methods of this great queen of pleasure, when once her science turned to the profit of a veritable love.

Madame Imperia bade adieu to her *mignons* and her *pigeons* with a royal fête given to celebrate her nuptials, the which were marvellous in their magnificence, and to them came all the Italian princes. She had, it was said, a million gold crowns. Considering the magnitude of that sum, one and all, instead of blaming Isle-Adam, did much felicitate him, forasmuch as it was clearly proven that neither Madame Imperia nor her young spouse paid any heed to this great wealth, because the thing you know of was their only thought. The Pope blessed their marriage, and said that it was a fine thing to

see a foolish virgin end thus and return to God by the path of marriage. But, during that last night when all were permitted to see the queen of beauty, soon to become a simple châtelaine in a French province, many there were who much deplored the nights of hearty laughter, midnight banquets, masquerades, diverting tricks, and those luxurious hours when everyone poured out his heart to her; in fine, they regretted all the comforts always to be found beneath that super-refined creature's roof, who seemed more seductive than in the springtime of her life, since the extreme ardor of her blood made her gleam like the sun. Many lamented that she had had the melancholy whim to end her life virtuously; to them Madame de l'Isle-Adam said jestingly, that, after twenty-four years in the public service, she had well earned the right to rest; some argued that, no matter how far away the sun might be, all could warm themselves in its rays, whereas she no longer showed her face to them at all; to them she replied that she would still have smiles for those lords who should come to see how well she played the rôle of virtuous woman. Thereupon, the English envoy said that she was capable of everything, even of carrying virtue to its extremest point.

She left a gift for each of her friends and large sums for the poor and needy at Rome; then handed to the convent which her daughter would have entered, and to the church she had built, the riches which she had inherited from Théodore, and which came to her from the Cardinal of Ragusa.

When the wedded pair set forth, they were escorted far upon their road by knights in mourning garb, and by the people, too, who hailed them with wishes for their great happiness, because Madame Imperia was harsh only to the great and was universally kind and gentle to the poor. This beauteous queen of love was fêted thus upon her passage through all the cities in Italy, where the report of her conversion had gained currency, and where one and all were curious to see that husband and wife who loved each other so—a rare case. Several princes received the charming couple at their courts, saying that all honor should be paid to that woman who had had the courage to renounce her empire over all men to become a virtuous woman. But there was one evil scoundrel, Monsignore the Duke of Ferrara, who said to Isle-Adam that his good fortune did not cost him dear. At this first insult, Madame Imperia showed how noble a heart she had, for she devoted all the crowns that came to her from her love-pigeons to the decoration of the dome of Santa-Maria del Fiore in Florence, the which caused much laughter at the expense of my lord of Este, who boasted that he had built a church despite the slenderness of his revenues; and be sure that he was sternly rebuked for that saying by his brother the cardinal.

The fair Imperia retained only her own property and that which the emperor had bestowed upon her from pure friendship since her departure, which was of considerable amount. Isle-Adam had an encounter

with that duke, wherein he wounded him. Thus neither Madame de l'Isle-Adam nor her husband could be in anywise reproached. This chivalrous incident caused her to be welcomed with much honor by all the places on her road, above all in Piedmont, where the fêtes were most sumptuous. The verses, such as sonnets, epithalamia, and odes, which the poets composed for that occasion, have been placed in several collections; but all poetry was paltry stuff beside her, who, as Messire Boccaccio hath it, was poetry itself.

The prize in this tournament of fêtes and gallantries fell to the good emperor of the Romans, who, knowing the folly of the Duke of Ferrara, despatched an envoy to his sweetheart, charged with manuscript letters in Latin, wherein he said to her that he loved her so dearly for herself that he was overjoyed to know that she was happy, but said that all her happiness came not from him; that he had lost the right to guerdon her, but that, if the French king should receive her coldly, then should he esteem it an honor to enlist a Villiers in the service of the Holy Empire and would endow him with such principalities as he might select in his domains. The fair Imperia made answer that she knew the emperor to be a most powerful sovereign, but that, even though she were destined to suffer a thousand affronts in France, she was determined to end her days there.

II

HOW THIS MARRIAGE ENDED

Uncertain whether she would or would not be well received, Madame de l'Isle-Adam chose not to go to court, but lived in the country, where her said lord spouse installed her sumptuously, purchasing the seignory of Beaumont-le-Vicomte, the which was the cause of the *equivoque* upon that name, related by our well-beloved master Rabelais in his most magnificent book. Isle-Adam purchased likewise the seignory of Nointel, the forest of Carenelle, Saint-Martin, and other places near Isle-Adam, where his brother Villiers lived. These said purchases made him the most powerful nobleman in Isle-de-France and the viscounty of Paris. He failed not to build a marvellous château at Beaumont, which was afterward ruined by the English, and decorated it with the furniture, friezes, strange carpets, chests, pictures, statues, and curiosities belonging to his wife, who was an excellent connoisseur, the which made that manor comparable to the most magnificent châteaux known. The husband and wife led a life so envied by all, that naught was talked of in the city of Paris and at court save this marriage, the good fortune of Monsieur de Beaumont, and, over and above all else, the perfect, loyal, gracious, and religious life of his spouse, whom, from

long custom, some still called *Madame Imperia;* who was no longer proud nor sharp-edged as steel, but had the virtues and qualities of a good woman, whose example a queen might follow. She was beloved of the Church for her great piety, forasmuch as she had never forgotten God, having, as she was wont to say, trifled much with men of the Church, abbés, bishops, cardinals, who gave her holy water in her shell, and remembered her eternal salvation behind two curtains.

The laudations of this lady had such effect that the king came to Beauvoisis that he might have occasion to see this marvellous creature, and did her lord the honor to lie at Beaumont, abode there three days, and led a royal hunt with the queen and the whole court. Doubt not that he was dazzled, as were the queen and all the ladies of the court, by the manners of the lovely hostess, who was proclaimed queen of courtesy and beauty. The king first of all, then the queen and all the rest, hastened to compliment Isle-Adam for having chosen such a wife. The châtelaine's modesty did more than pride would have done, for she was bidden to court and everywhere, so imperious was her great heart, so tyrannous her violent love for her spouse! Doubt not that her charms, hidden behind the curtains of virtue, were but the more seductive.

The king bestowed upon his former envoy the vacant office of the lieutenancy of Isle-de-France and the provostship of Paris, giving him the title of Vicomte de Beaumont, and thereby made him

governor of the whole province, and established him on a firm footing at court. But from this promotion came a grievous wound in the heart of Madame de Beaumont, for that a villain, jealous of that unalloyed happiness, asked her as if in jest if Beaumont had spoken to her of his first love for Mademoiselle de Montmorency, who was at this time twenty-two years of age, inasmuch as she was but sixteen at the time of the marriage in Rome; and loved him so dearly that she remained a virgin, would listen to no mention of marriage, and would die of despair in her skirts, being unable to forget her stolen lover, and would fain take the veil at the convent of Chelles.

Madame Imperia, in the six years that her happiness had endured, had never heard that name, and by that fact knew that she was well loved. You may well believe that those years had been consumed like a single day, that both believed that they were married but the day before, that each one of their nights was a wedding-night, and that, if the viscount left his wife, to look to some affair away from home, he was most melancholy, nor could lose sight of her, nor she of him.

The king, who loved the viscount well, likewise said to him words which were like a thorn thrust into his heart, saying: "Thou hast no children?"—To which Beaumont made answer like a man upon whose sore one should place his finger: "Monseigneur, my brother hath children; thereby the perpetuation of our line is assured."—Now it happened

that his brother's two children died prematurely, one by a fall from his horse at a jousting, the other of disease. Monsieur de l'Isle-Adam was so afflicted by these two deaths that he died thereof, so dearly did he love his two sons. By this means were the viscounty of Beaumont, the purchased domains of Carenelle, Saint-Martin, Nointel, and the estates appurtenant thereto united with the seignory of Isle-Adam and the neighboring forests, and the younger son became the head of the family.

In these days, madame had attained the forty-fifth year of her age, and was still young enough to give birth to children, so sound were all her organs; but she brought none forth. When she saw that the lineage of Isle-Adam was exhausted, she boasted that she would produce an heir. Now, as in seven years she had not had the faintest suspicion of pregnancy, she believed, according to the opinion of a learned physician whom she summoned from Paris, and who came secretly, that this sterility proceeded from the fact that both alike, she and her husband, always rather lovers than wedded folk, took so much pleasure in the act that conception was thereby prevented. And so, during a certain time, she strove mightily, did the goodwoman, to remain as calm as a domestic fowl, forasmuch as the physician had reminded her that, in the state of nature, the beasts fail not to produce, for the females resort to no artifices nor endearments nor wantonnesses nor any of the thousand tricks wherewith the women cajole the olives of Poissy; and for that

reason, she said, were rightfully called *beasts;* but she promised to play no more with her dear branch of coral, and to forget all the sweetmeats of love she had invented. Alas! although she lay stretched out, like that German woman whose habitual stillness was the reason that her husband attacked her after she was dead, then went, the poor baron, to implore absolution for that sin from the Pope, who issued his famous brief, wherein he begged the women of Franconia to move gently in the act, in order that that sin might no more be committed— Madame de l'Isle-Adam conceived not, and fell into great melancholy. Then did she begin to observe how pensive Isle-Adam was at times, and watched him when he thought that he was not seen, and wept because he had no fruit of his love. Ere long, the two mingled their tears, inasmuch as everything was common in that happy union, and, as they were never apart, the thought of one must needs be the thought of the other.

When madame saw a poor man's child, she well-nigh died of grief and took a whole day to be comforted. Seeing this great sorrow, Isle-Adam gave orders that all children should hold aloof from his wife and said the sweetest words to her, as that children often turned out ill; to which she made answer that a child made by them, who loved each other so dearly, would be the noblest child in the world; he said that their children might die like his poor brother's, to which she made anwer that she would no more allow them to go away from her

side than a hen its chickens, but would keep them always within reach of her eye,—in a word, had an answer for everything.

Madame summoned a woman suspected of sorcery, and who was supposed to have observed these mysteries, who said to her that she had often seen women who could not conceive despite their efforts to that end, succeed after the manner of beasts, which was the most simple. Thereupon, madame resolved to imitate the beasts, but obtained thereby no swelling of the belly, which remained as firm and white as marble. Then did she recur to the physical science of the learned doctors of Paris, and summoned a famous Arabian physician who had come to France to introduce there a new theory of science. This physician, reared in the school of one Sieur Avorroes, pronounced this cruel sentence: that, because she had received too many men in her vessel, and had yielded to their caprices as was her custom in plying the pretty trade of love, she had ruined forever certain clusters to which Dame Nature had hung certain eggs, which, being fertilized by the male, were hatched in secret and whence came forth in child-birth the young of every female that hath breasts, witness the caul with which some children come into the world.

This reasoning seemed so idiotic, bestial, foolish, opposed to the Holy Books, wherein is established the majesty of man made in God's image, and so entirely contrary to recognized theories, sound reasoning, and righteous doctrine, that the doctors of Paris

made innumerable jests there-anent. The Arabian physician left the school, where Sieur Averroes, his master's name, was never heard. The surgeons told madame, who had come by stealth to Paris, to follow her accustomed course, since she had had, during her life of love, the fair Théodore by the Cardinal of Ragusa; that the privilege of making children endured in woman so long as the tide of blood continued, and that she must take heed to multiply the opportunities of conception. This advice seemed to her so judicious that she multiplied her victories, but it was multiplying her defeats as well, since she obtained only flowers without fruit.

Thereupon, the poor afflicted creature wrote to the Pope, who loved her much, and told him of her sorrows. The good Pope replied, by a gracious homily writ with his own hand, that when human knowledge and the things of earth failed her, she must needs turn to heaven and implore the grace of God. Whereupon she resolved to go barefooted, accompanied by her spouse, to Notre-Dame de Liesse, celebrated for her intervention in such cases, and there made a vow to build a magnificent cathedral in gratitude for a child. But she bruised and disfigured her pretty feet and conceived naught else than a most violent disappointment, which was so great that some of her lovely hair fell out and some turned white. And, finally, the power to make children was withdrawn from her, whence divers dense vapors caused by hypochondria, which yellowed her skin.

She then counted forty-nine years, and dwelt in her château of Isle-Adam, where she wasted away like a leper at the Hôtel-Dieu. The poor creature was the more desperate in that Isle-Adam was still amorous and unvaryingly kind to her, whereas she failed in her duty from having formerly had too much commerce with men, and was no longer, as she herself would say with bitter scorn, aught but a kettle to cook chitterlings.

"Ah!" she said one morning when these thoughts tormented her heart, "despite the Church, despite the king, despite everything, Madame de l'Isle-Adam is still the vile Imperia."

In truth, she fell into paroxysms of evil passion when she looked upon that blooming gentleman, who had everything that heart can desire,—great wealth, royal favor, love beyond compare, a matchless wife, such pleasures as no other could afford,—yet lacked that which is dearest to the head of a great family, to wit: an heir. Thus thinking, she wished to die, recalling how great and noble he had been toward her and how she failed in her duty in giving him no children and having thenceforth no hope in that regard. She buried her grief in the lowest depths of her heart, and conceived a devotion worthy of her great love. To carry out this heroic design, she made herself more amorous than ever, took extreme care of her charms, and had recourse to cunning methods of maintaining her bodily perfections, which were glorious beyond belief.

About this time, Monsieur de Montmorency overcame his daughter's repulsion for the married state, and there was much talk of her union with one Monsieur de Châtillon. Madame Imperia, whose château was no more than three leagues from Montmorency, sent her husband out one day to hunt in the forest, and bent her steps toward the château where Mademoiselle de Montmorency at that time dwelt. Arrived in the park, she walked about there, bidding a servant say to her young mistress that a lady had a very urgent message for her and begged that she would give her audience. Much disturbed by what was told her of the beauties, courtesy, and retinue of the unknown lady, Mademoiselle de Montmorency hastened to the gardens and there met her rival whom she knew not.

"My dear," said the poor woman, weeping to see that the maiden was as fair as she, "I know that they would force you to marry Monsieur de Châtillon, although you loved Monsieur de l'Isle-Adam; trust in the prophecy which I here make to you, that he whom you once loved and who was false to you only because of snares whereinto an angel would have fallen, will be rid of his old wife ere the leaves have fallen. Thus will your constant love receive its crown of flowers. Therefore have courage to refuse this marriage which is brewing, and you will enjoy your own beloved. Give me your promise to love Isle-Adam well,—who is the most lovable of men,—never to cause him pain, and tell him to disclose to you all the secrets of love

devised by Madame Imperia, for, by putting them in practice, you, a young woman, will readily banish all memory of her from his mind."

Mademoiselle de Montmorency was so astounded that she could make no reply, but allowed that queen of beauty to depart and took her for a fairy, until an artisan told her that that fairy was Madame de l'Isle-Adam. Although this adventure was inexplicable, this Mademoiselle de Montmorency told her father that she would give no answer touching the proposed marriage until autumn had passed, so natural is it for Love to marry Hope, despite the absurd frauds which that perfidious but gracious companion tosses to him to swallow like cakes of honey.

During the month when the grapes were gathered, Madame Imperia would not allow Isle-Adam to leave her and resorted to her most ardent seductions, so that you would have said that she designed to ruin him, for, in his own heart, Isle-Adam fancied that he had to do with a new wife each night. On awaking, the good woman besought him to remember that love, fashioned in all perfectness. Then, to learn the real state of her friend's heart, she said:

"Poor Isle-Adam, we did not wisely to marry a stripling like thee, who hadst seen but twenty-three summers, with an old woman who was close upon the heels of forty."

He made answer that his good fortune was such that thousands were envious of him, that at her age

she had not her like among young maids, and that, if ever she grew old, he would love her wrinkles, believing that she would be pretty in the tomb and that her skeleton would still be lovable.

To such answers, which brought the water to her eyes, she slyly replied, one morning, that Mademoiselle de Montmorency was most fair and loyal. These words caused Isle-Adam to say that she caused him pain by reminding him of the sole injury that he had ever done another in his whole life, the breaking of his plighted word to his first love, his love for whom she had banished from his heart. This frank avowal caused her to throw her arms about him and strain him to her heart, deeply moved by such loyalty of speech where many would have equivocated.

"My dear love," she said, "these many days I have been afflicted by a weakness of the heart, whereby I have been threatened with death from my early youth, a sentence which the Arab doctor hath confirmed. If I die, I wish that thou shouldst swear to me by the most binding oath of a true knight that thou wilt take Mademoiselle de Montmorency to wife. I am so certain that my death is near, that I leave my worldly goods to thy family on condition that this marriage takes place."

Hearing this, Isle-Adam turned pale, and felt his strength give way at the mere thought of an eternal parting from his dear wife.

"Yes, dear treasure of love," she said, "I am punished by God where my sins were committed,

for the great joy which I experience dilates the heart and thus hath weakened the vessels, which, according to the Arab doctor, will burst at a moment's warning; but I have always prayed to God to take me hence at my present time of life, for I do not choose to see my beauty ruined by lapse of time."

Then did this great and noble-hearted woman see how dearly she was loved. This is how she obtained the greatest sacrifice of love that ever hath been made upon this earth. She alone knew what attractions lay in the endearments, caresses, and amorous dalliance of the marriage-bed, which were so potent that poor Isle-Adam would have preferred to die rather than be deprived of the amorous sweetmeats which she there compounded. At the avowal made by her that in a love-frenzy her heart would some day burst, the chevalier threw himself at her knees, and said to her that, to preserve her life, he would never again ask her for love, that he would live content to see her and feel her by his side, to kiss her hair and rub against her skirts. Thereupon, she replied, bursting into tears, that she would rather die than lose a single bud of his bush of eglantines, that she would die as she had lived, since for her joy she could so act that a man would satisfy her when such was her will, without there being any need for her to say a word.

At this point, it is most essential to state that she had from the said Cardinal of Ragusa a precious gift which that gallant called a brief *in articulo mortis*.

Pardon the three Latin words which we quote from the cardinal. This gift was a thin glass phial, made in Venice, of the size of a bean, containing a poison so subtle that, on breaking it between the teeth, death would come suddenly, without pain; and he had procured the said phial from Signora Tofana, the skilled maker of poisons in the city of Rome. Now, this glass was set beneath the stone of a ring, guarded from all hard substances by thin plates of gold. More than once did poor Imperia put the glass in her mouth, but could not resolve to bite it, so much pleasure did she take in the meeting which she thought to be the last. Then she amused herself by passing in review all her methods of enjoyment, before biting the glass; then said to herself that when she should feel the most perfect of all joys she would crush the phial.

The poor creature laid down her life during the night of the first day of October. Thereupon, there arose a great outcry in the forests and among the clouds, as if the Loves had cried: *The great Noc is dead!* in imitation of the heathen gods, who, at the Saviour's coming, fled into the skies, crying: *The great Pan is slain!* Words which were heard by certain sailors on the Eubœan Sea, and preserved by a Father of the Church.

Madame Imperia died unspoiled in beauty, so careful had God been to make an irreproachable model of womankind. She had, it was said, a superb flush upon her features, caused by the proximity of the flaming wings of Pleasure, who

lay on the ground weeping beside her. Her spouse mourned her as woman was never mourned before, misdoubting not that she had died to rid him of a barren wife, forasmuch as the surgeon who embalmed her said not a word touching the cause of that death. That noble deed was disclosed, six years after her lord's marriage to Mademoiselle de Montmorency, when that simple creature told him of the visit of Madame Imperia. Thenceforth the poor gentleman dragged out a melancholy existence, and died at last, unable to banish the memory of the joys of love, the which it lay not in the power of a silly girl to restore to him: and thereby did he afford proof of a remark often made in those days, that that woman never died in a heart wherein she had once reigned.

This teaches us that virtue is well understood only by them who have practised vice, forasmuch as, among the most prudish women, few would have laid down their lives thus, however exalted their religious principles.

EPILOGUE

Ha! thou little madcap, who hast it in charge to enliven the household,—despite a thousand prohibitions, thou hast wallowed in that slough of melancholy, wherein thou hast already fished up poor Berthe, and dost return, with hair dishevelled, like a girl forced by a squad of lansquenets! Where are thy pretty golden needles and bells, thy flowers with fanciful arabesques in filigree? where hast thou left thy scarlet cap, adorned with priceless trinkets, which costs a bag of pearls? Why ruin with destructive tears thy black eyes, so merry when the salt of a good story gleams therein, that the popes forgive thee thy words under favor of thy laughter, feel their souls caught between thy ivory teeth, their hearts pricked by the sharp, rosy point thy tongue darts at them, and barter their slipper for a hundred of the smiles which pulverize upon thy lips the vermilion of thy rich blood? Laughing wench, if thou wouldst abide ever fresh and youthful, weep no more. Think upon riding flies without bridles, of bridling with lovely clouds thy chameleon-like chimeras, of metamorphosing live realities into figures clad in irises, caparisoned with crimson dreams, and sleeved with wings as

blue as partridges' eyes. By the Body and the Blood, by the Censer and the Seal, by the Book and the Sword, by the Rag and the Gold, by Sound and Color, if thou dost return to that den of elegies where eunuchs collect ugly women for imbecile sultans, then will I curse thee with thirty thousand curses, make thee fast from deviltry and love, and—

Brouf! Yonder she goes astride a sunbeam, in company with a Ten that bursts in aëriform meteors! She frolics in their prisms, running so straight, so high, so bold, so counter to good sense, good manners, and good everything, that one must needs know her a long way off to follow her siren's tail with silver edges, which quivers among the wiles of these fresh peals of laughter. Just God! she has rushed forth like a hundred schoolboys into a hedge full of blackberries, at the close of Vespers! To the devil with the master! the Ten is finished! A fig for work! Hither, my gallant comrades!

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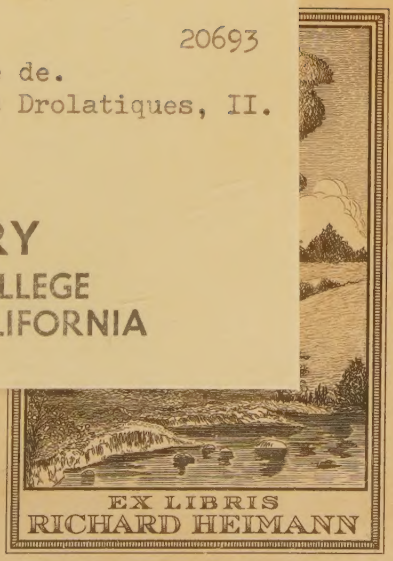
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